Fruit purées and syrups

Be adventurous with fruit — turn it into a saucy syrup for ice cream and puddings, a soft, smooth purée for luscious desserts, or a refreshingly tangy-tasting topping.

Fruit brings such a fresh, light flavour to such a variety of dishes that it is worth using as much as you can — whenever you can. The microwave makes light work of cooking fruit, whether fresh or frozen. The syrup and purées here make 'more-ish' sauces and toppings, and can also be used as a base for delicious drinks and desserts.

Fruit syrups

A fruit syrup is a sweet, clear, fruit-flavoured liquid. The fruit is cooked with water and flavouring, if liked, then pressed through a sieve lined with muslin or cheesecloth to extract the maximum amount of pure, clear juice. This is sweetened to taste before microwaving until boiling and thickened. The fruit syrups keep for two weeks in the refrigerator.

Fruit purées

Fruit used to make purées does not always need cooking. Raw soft fruit and drained canned fruit can quickly be puréed in a blender or mashed to a pulp with a fork, depending on how smooth the consistency needs to be. Seedy fruits, such as raspberries or strawberries, may also need sieving to remove the pips. Harder fruits, such as apples or blackcurrants, need a short spell in the microwave to soften them before puréeing; sweeten to taste.

Purées keep for up to two days in the refrigerator; they also freeze well (see page 1445).

Crunchy Fruit Layer

DON LAST

Crunchy fruit layer

4 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz apricots
175g / 6oz cooking gooseberries*
60-75ml / 4-5tbls caster sugar
225g / 8oz shortbread biscuits, crushed
75g / 3oz chopped nuts

SERVES 4

1 Place the apricots in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until softened, stirring once.
2 Place the gooseberries in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until softened, stirring once.
3 Press both fruits through a stainless steel or nylon sieve into separate bowls, rinsing the sieve between each. Sweeten each purée with half the sugar or to taste.
4 Spoon half the apricot purée into a glass bowl and top with a quarter of the biscuits. Cover with half the gooseberry purée and top with another quarter of the biscuits. Repeat with the remaining purées and biscuit crumbs. Sprinkle with the chopped nuts.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use halved and stoned plums.

Apple spread

2½ mins

Standing time: 1 min

This soft, smooth purée makes a delicious alternative to jams and icings. Spread it on toasted bread or scones.

1½ cooking apples (weighing 275g / 10oz), peeled, cored and sliced
10ml / 2tsp orange juice
100g / 4oz cottage cheese, drained
caster sugar, to sweeten

MAKES 250g / 9oz

1 Place the apples in a small bowl. Cover and microwave for 2½-3 minutes, or until soft, stirring once. Uncover and leave to stand for 1 minute.
2 Spoon the apples into a blender. Add the orange juice and cottage cheese and purée until smooth. Sweeten to taste. Pour into a polythene container, cover and chill for at least 2 hours to thicken. Store in the refrigerator.

VARIATION
Apple sauce: for a savoury sauce to serve with pork, omit the sugar and season the puréed apple mixture with salt and pepper. Serve warm.

Raspberry lemon chicken

16¼ mins

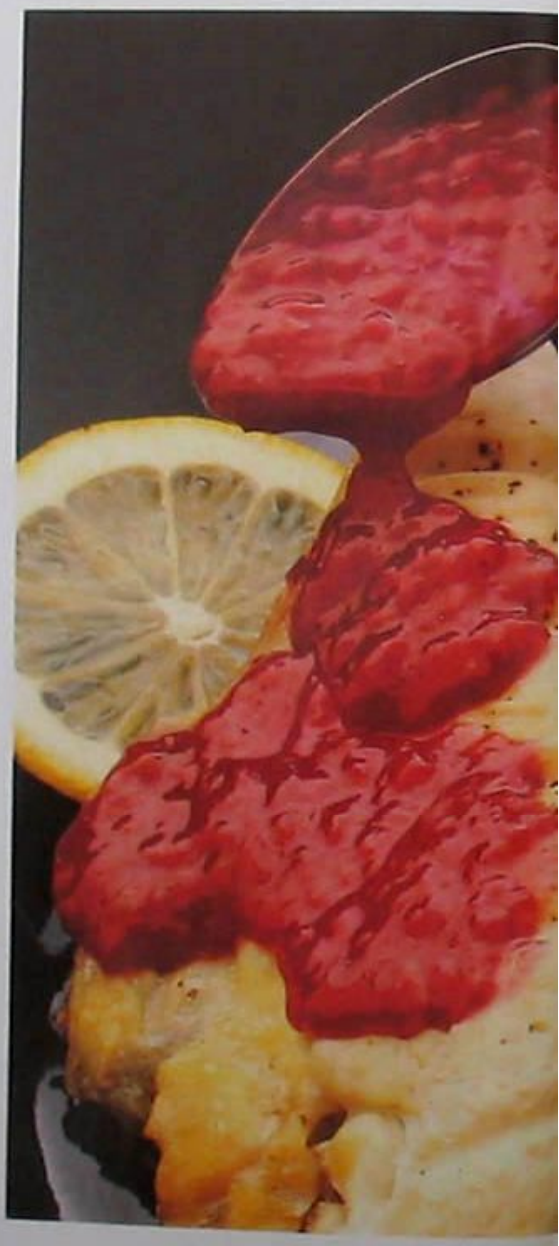
Standing time: none

If fresh raspberries are available, omit Stage 3.

25g / 1oz butter
4 chicken breasts, skinned
salt and pepper
175g / 6oz frozen raspberries
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls water
5ml / 1tsp sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
4 slices lemon

SERVES 4

Left: *Apple Spread*
Below: *Raspberry Lemon Chicken*



1 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, or until melted. Brush chicken breasts with melted butter. Season with pepper.
2 Place the chicken on a roasting rack, bone side up and with meatiest parts to outside. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink; rearrange pieces once. Set aside.
3 Place the frozen raspberries in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until thawed.
4 Crush the raspberries well with a fork, then stir in the lemon juice, water and sugar. Blend the cornflour with 15ml / 1tbls of the mixture, then stir back into the bulk of the mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until thickened and hot, stirring twice. Cover and set aside.
2 Microwave chicken at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until heated. Spoon sauce over. Season chicken and garnish with the lemon slices to serve.

Blackcurrant syrup

8½ mins

Standing time: none

A fruit syrup is excellent served over ice cream, puddings and crêpes, or used in recipes, particularly sorbets (see Microtips, page 1445).

450g / 1lb fresh blackcurrants
60ml / 4tbls water
100g / 4oz sugar

MAKES ABOUT 275ml / ½pt

VARIATIONS
Other well-flavoured fruits, such as redcurrants, raspberries, strawberries and blackberries can be used instead of blackcurrants.

Freezer notes

If fresh fruit is unavailable, use frozen. Omit the water and microwave the frozen fruit for 5-6 minutes until boiling. Continue as directed in the recipe.

How to microwave Blackcurrant syrup

Place *fruit and water in a tall jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until boiling; stir twice. Line a sieve with muslin; place over a large bowl. Pour in the hot fruit.*

Mash *the fruit with the back of a wooden spoon through the sieve to extract as much juice as possible. Discard the pulp and muslin from the sieve. Add the sugar to the juice.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes until boiling; stir once. Boil for 1 minute. Skim off foam. Pour into a clean, hot jar and cover.*

Store *in the refrigerator, if not using immediately, and use within 7-10 days. Serve over pancakes, waffles, ices or use in recipes.*

Peach ripple ice cream

13½ mins

Standing time: none

275ml / ½pt milk
2 eggs
100g / 4oz caster sugar
425g / 15oz can peaches, drained
10ml / 2tsp almond flavouring
275ml / ½pt double or whipping cream,
60ml / 4tbls Raspberry Syrup (see Blackcurrant Syrup variations page 1443)

SERVES 6-8

1 Pour the milk into a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until hot.
2 Meanwhile, break the eggs into a large freezer / microwave container. Whisk in the sugar, then gradually whisk in the hot milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking after 2 minutes, then every 30 seconds, until the custard coats a spoon.
3 Purée the drained peaches in a blender until smooth and stir into the custard together with the almond flavouring. Cover the surface of the custard to prevent a skin forming and leave to cool. Chill throughly.
4 Whip the cream until just thick and fold into the custard. Cover and freeze for about 2 hours, or until half frozen.
5 Beat the ice cream with an electric whisk until smooth. Lightly fold in the Raspberry Syrup so it is streaked through the ice cream. Cover and freeze a further 3-4 hours, or until firm.
6 To serve: soften the ice cream for 20-30 minutes at room temperature, or microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-40 seconds. Scoop into individual dishes, or serve in ice cream cones. Drizzle extra Raspberry Syrup over the top, if liked, and serve.

RAY DUNN

Blackcurrant marble fool

3 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz frozen blackcurrants
grated zest of 1 orange
30-45ml / 2-3tbls caster sugar
150ml / ¼pt double cream, whipped
240g / 8½oz Greek-style yoghurt

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the blackcurrants and orange zest in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until boiling. Cool slightly, then purée in a blender or press through a stainless steel or nylon sieve. Stir in the sugar to taste. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
2 Fold the whipped cream lightly into the yoghurt. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
3 Just before serving, fold the blackcurrant purée into the yoghurt, swirling it through to give a marbled effect. Serve with biscuits, if liked.

Cook's notes

Always use a stainless steel or nylon sieve when sieving fruit for a syrup or purée. A metal mesh can give the fruit a metallic taste and tinge the colour.

Peach Ripple Ice Cream

Strawberry milkshake

8½ mins

Standing time: none

These creamy, frothy milkshakes show one of the uses you can make of a fruit syrup. Use any flavoured syrup with vanilla ice cream or complementary flavour.

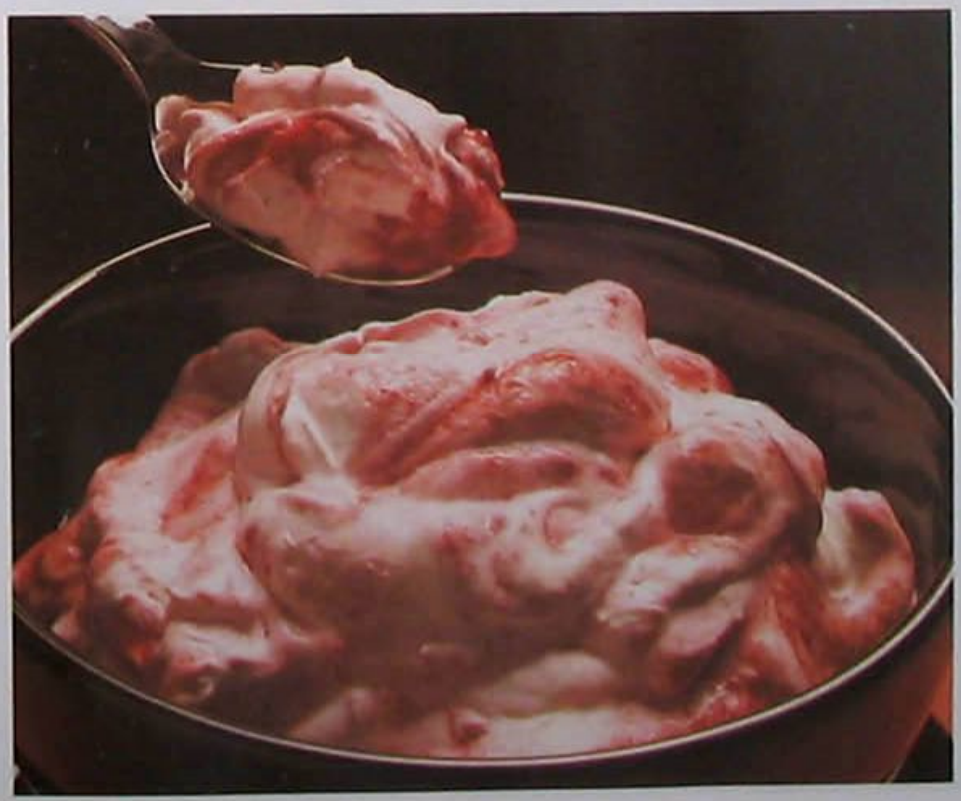
120ml / 8tbls Strawberry Syrup
275ml / ½pt milk
150ml / ¼pt strawberry or vanilla ice cream
1 egg

SERVES 2

1 Prepare the syrup following the recipe for Blackcurrant Syrup (page 1443), but using fresh or frozen strawberries. Measure 120ml / 8tbls syrup and reserve the rest in the refrigerator.
2 Place the milk, 90ml / 6tbls of the syrup, ice cream and egg in a liquidizer. Process for 1-1½ minutes, until frothy.
3 Pour into tall glasses. Scoop half the ice cream into each glass and drizzle over 15ml / 1tbls of syrup. Serve at once with straws.

RAY DUNS

Right: *Strawberry Milkshake*
Below: *Blackcurrant Marble Fool*



Freezer notes

Fruit purées can be frozen for up to 6 months; pour into containers leaving 12mm / ½in headspace or freeze in ice cube trays. To thaw 275ml / ½pt purée, turn out into a bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-6 minutes, or until thawed, breaking up and stirring twice. Stand for 5 minutes.

Microtips

For a fabulous sorbet, microwave a fruit syrup (page 1443). Whisk three egg whites with pinch of cream of tartar until stiff; gradually whisk in 275ml / ½pt syrup. Freeze in a covered container for 3-4 hours until firm. Soften before serving.

Microwaving salmon steaks

Salmon tastes super and microwaves beautifully, especially when complemented by a buttery sauce. So why not treat yourself to this fabulous fish?

Fish cooks superbly in the microwave and salmon* is no exception. It always stays moist and full of flavour — and cooking smells are minimal. Salmon steaks are particularly convenient to cook and serve.

When choosing steaks, check that the flesh is firm and bright. Salmon is rich, so 100g-150g / 4-6oz steaks will be plenty for one person. The size and thickness of the steak depends on the size of the fish and which part it is cut from. In recipes where the weight of steak is not specified, times given are for 100g / 4oz steaks. See chart for alternatives.

As well as being more reasonably priced, steaks are easier to prepare and cook — especially in the microwave — than a whole fish. Simply rinse the steaks to remove any excess scales, then drain and microwave.

Salmon steaks are usually served with a sauce. This can be as simple or sophisticated as you please, from a tangy lemon sauce to a velvety smooth butter sauce.

Test for doneness

Test the steaks at the end of the minimum recommended cooking time by inserting a sharp knife into the thickest part near the bone. If cooked, the flesh should flake easily and appear slightly opaque near the bone.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Substitute either Jewfish or Snapper cutlets.

Salmon with Wine Sauce: recipe on page 1450

How to microwave salmon steaks

Arrange *the steaks in a dish and tuck in tail ends. Brush each steak very thinly with melted butter and sprinkle with a few drops of lemon juice*

Cover *the dish with stretch wrap and roll back at one edge. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for half the recommended cooking time (see chart).*

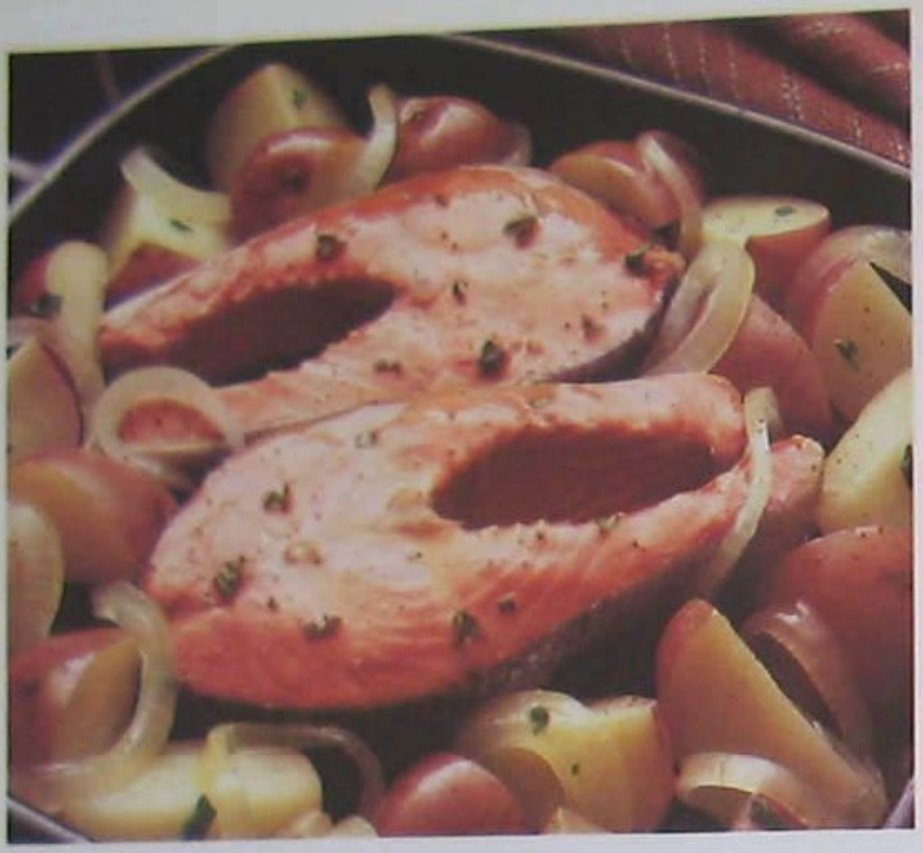
Turn *steaks over; brush lightly with melted butter. Cover and microwave for remaining time, or until cooked. Stand, covered, for 1-2 minutes.*

Microwaving times for salmon steaks

AMOUNT	TIME AT 50% (MEDIUM)	PROCEDURE
1 × 100g / 4oz 2 × 100g / 4oz 3 × 100g / 4oz 4 × 100g / 4oz	2½-3 mins 3½-4 mins 4½-5 mins 6½-7 mins	Tuck in thin tail ends. Cover, turn over halfway through cooking. Stand, covered, for 1-2 minutes.
1 × 175g / 6oz 2 × 175g / 6oz 3 × 175g / 6oz 4 × 175g / 6oz	3-4 mins 4-6 mins 7-8 mins 10-11 mins	Follow procedure for 100g / 4oz steaks.

How to position salmon steaks

Salmon *steaks can also be arranged in a square or a round dish in a ring with thinner tail ends towards centre. Tuck tail ends in so they are pointing towards central bone as an extra precaution against overcooking.*



Salmon steaks with potatoes

16¾ mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

350g / 12oz red potatoes, cut into 4cm / 1½in chunks
1 onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
2 × 150-175g / 5-6oz salmon steaks

PARSLEY BUTTER SAUCE
40g / 1½oz butter
10ml / 2tsp milk
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
pinch of dried sage
pinch of grated nutmeg

SERVES 2

1 Blend all the ingredients for the sauce in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds.
2 Put the potatoes and onion in a 25 × 20cm / 10 × 8in casserole and pour over half the sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, or until the potatoes are almost tender, stirring twice.
3 Push the vegetables to the outside of the dish and arrange the steaks in the centre, with the tail ends tucked in. Spoon the remaining sauce over the salmon and vegetables.
4 Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 8-10 minutes, or until the fish flakes easily and the flesh near the bone is opaque. Rotate the dish twice during cooking and turn the fish over after 4 minutes. Leave to stand, covered, for 1-2 minutes. Serve, accompanied by a crisp, green salad.

Above: *Salmon Steaks with Potatoes*
Below: *Chivey Salmon Steaks*

Chivey salmon steaks

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

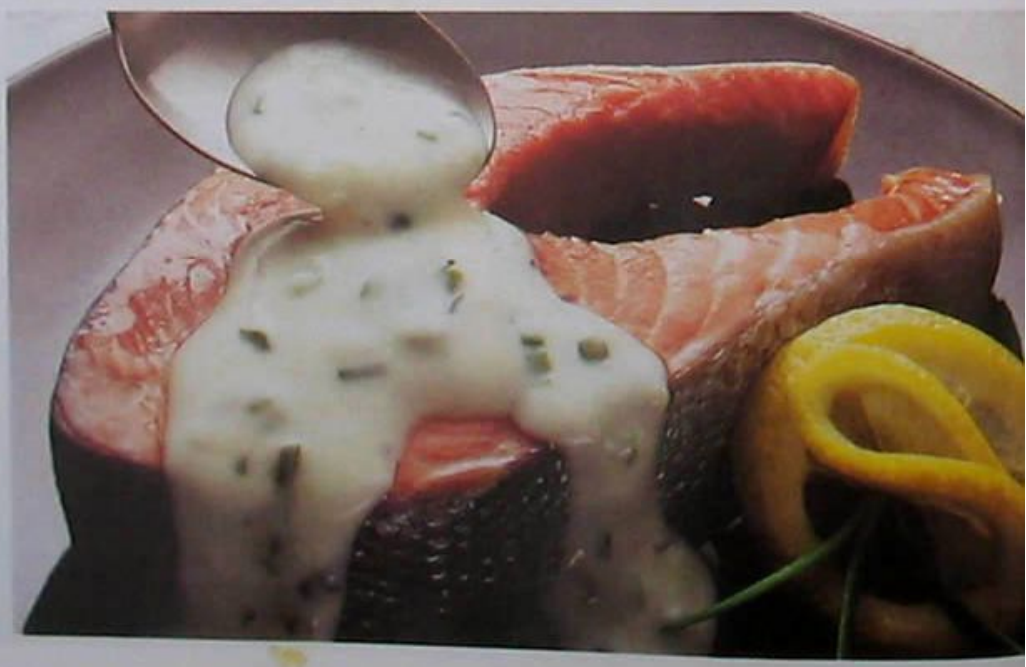
4 salmon steaks

CHIVE SAUCE
15ml / 1tbls butter
½ small onion, finely chopped
20ml / 4tsp plain flour
10ml / 2tsp snipped chives
salt and pepper
pinch of dried savory
pinch of garlic powder
150ml / ¼pt milk
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the salmon following the step by step instructions, page 1447. Cover and leave to stand.
2 Make the sauce: place the butter and onion in a jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-40 seconds, or until the butter melts. Stir in the flour, chives, seasoning, savory and garlic, then gradually blend in the milk.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until the mixture thickens and bubbles, stirring 3 times. Blend in the lemon juice.
4 Serve the salmon with the sauce.

Chivey salmon steaks for two: microwave two steaks. Halve sauce ingredients. Microwave butter and onion for 10-15 seconds and mixed sauce for 1-1½ minutes.



Salmon supper

16½ mins

Standing time: none

4 salmon steaks
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
20ml / 4tsp snipped chives
salt and pepper
75ml / 3fl oz half cream
50ml / 2fl oz milk
225g / 8oz frozen sliced green beans
225g / 8oz frozen corn kernels

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the salmon following the step by step instructions, page 1447. Leave to stand, covered, while preparing the vegetables.

2 Place the butter in a bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until melted. Stir in the flour, chives, seasoning, cream and milk until smooth.

3 Stir in the green beans and corn and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-9 minutes, until the sauce thickens and the vegetables are tender, stirring every 2 minutes.

4 Arrange the vegetables around the salmon and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1½-2 minutes until well heated through.

Salmon supper for one: Microwave one steak. Quarter the remaining ingredients, using 30ml / 2tbls half cream and 15ml / 1tbls milk. Melt the butter at 100% (High) for 10-15 seconds, then microwave the combined vegetables for 3-3½ minutes at 50% (Medium).

Microtips

Salmon steaks sometimes 'pop' and spatter during microwaving. If you want to avoid this, cut out the central bone with kitchen scissors or a sharp knife. If you leave the bone in, take care when uncovering the fish as the spattering may continue briefly after cooking time, and splash your hands.

Salmon with wine sauce

9¼ mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

4 salmon steaks

WINE SAUCE
75g / 3oz butter
20ml / 4tsp lemon juice
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine
2 garlic cloves, crushed
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
1.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter, lemon juice, wine and garlic for the sauce in a jug and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, whisking every minute. Stir in parsley.
2 Place the salmon in a baking dish and tuck in the thin tail ends. Brush with half the sauce.
3 Cover and microwave according to the chart, page 1447. Turn the steaks over halfway through and baste with the juices.
4 Remove the steaks, cover and stand for 1-2 minutes. Beat the mustard into the remaining sauce and stir into the juices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, until piping hot.

Salmon with wine sauce for two: microwave two steaks. Halve sauce ingredients: microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes then with mustard for 10-20 seconds.

Freezer notes

To thaw 450g / 1lb salmon steaks, cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8-8½ minutes. Turn over and rearrange four times, then stand for 5-10 minutes.

Slimmer's notes

Microwave fresh salmon, using lemon juice rather than butter, and at 45Cal / 191kJ per 25g / 1oz it is a slimmer's treat. Serve accompanied by a crisp salad or fresh green vegetables.

Salmon with caper sauce

7½ mins

Standing time: none

4 salmon steaks

CAPER SAUCE
50g / 2oz butter
15ml / 1tbls capers, drained and rinsed
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp onion powder
pinch of paprika
pinch of pepper

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the salmon following step-by-step instructions, page 1447. Leave to stand, covered, for 1-2 minutes, and prepare the sauce.
2 Combine all the sauce ingredients in a small jug or bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until warm. Serve the sauce over the salmon.

Salmon-stuffed cannelloni

5½ mins

Standing time: none

8 cannelloni or manicotti shells, cooked and drained

FILLING
2 × 175g / 6oz salmon steaks, cooked, skinned and flaked
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
3 spring onions, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
1.5ml / ¼tsp finely grated lemon zest
pepper

SAUCE
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
150ml / ¼pt yoghurt
15ml / 1tbls milk
1.5ml / ¼tsp dillweed
pinch of garlic powder

TOPPING
½ cucumber, seeded and chopped
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

Salmon-Stuffed Cannelloni

1 Combine the filling ingredients in a large bowl, season to taste generously with freshly ground black pepper and mix together.
2 Place all the sauce ingredients in a food processor or blender and process until smooth. Alternatively beat vigorously with a wooden spoon until smooth.
3 Stir the topping ingredients together in a separate bowl.
4 Assemble and microwave the cannelloni following the step-by-steps opposite.

VARIATION
To prepare pasta in the microwave see Part 11, page 307.

How to assemble and microwave Salmon-stuffed cannelloni

Using *a small teaspoon, carefully spoon the filling mixture into the cooked cannelloni shells. Place the filled pasta shells in a shallow 23 × 18cm / 9 × 7in casserole.*

Cover *the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Drain off any excess liquid from the dish, then spoon the sauce over the shells and re-cover.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3 minutes, or until hot, rotating the dish once. Transfer the pasta shells to a serving dish, sprinkle over the cucumber topping and serve.*

CLASSIC DISH

Gratin dauphinoise

Microwave this classic French vegetable accompaniment, with all its traditional flavour and texture, in less than a quarter of the conventional time. It's so simple, serve it any day — not just for treats!

Good main meat dishes cry out for an extra special accompaniment to make them into a truly memorable meal. Potatoes are excellent for microwaving in so many forms, and this classic French dish is one of the super ways in which the microwave can glamorize the humble potato.

Serve this creamy, delicious vegetable with roasts, braises, grills or fried meats — the rich garlic-flavoured sauce which coats the potato slices complements all manner of meat and poultry. Just a good wiping of the cut surface of the garlic around the dish will provide a subtle flavour which permeates the potatoes as they cook, without a lingering aftertaste.

Gratin dauphinoise

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb large potatoes
½ garlic clove
10ml / 2tsp butter
150ml / ¼pt double cream
50g / 2oz Gruyère cheese, grated
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan
salt and pepper
grated nutmeg, to sprinkle

SERVES 4

How to microwave Gratin dauphinoise

Cut *the potatoes into wafer-thin slices and rinse thoroughly under cold running water to remove excess starch. Soak the slices in a bowl of cold, fresh water for 15 minutes to rid them of any remaining starch.*

Prepare *a shallow, 23 × 12.5cm / 9 × 5in rectangular dish, by rubbing all over the base and sides with the garlic clove. Using a piece of greaseproof paper, rub the butter thickly over the dish.*

Drain *the potatoes and pat dry on absorbent paper. Layer the potatoes, cream, Gruyère, Parmesan, seasoning and nutmeg in the dish. The amounts will make four sets of layers, ending with cheeses and seasonings.*

Place *the dish on an inverted saucer in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-13 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 3-4 minutes. Do not stir or rearrange the slices during cooking.*

Test *for doneness with the point of a sharp knife — the potatoes are cooked when tender in the centre. Stand, covered for 5 minutes. If liked, brown briefly under a hot grill for a darker topping.*

Microtips

Choose waxy, new potatoes for this dish. They cook to the right degree of tenderness, yet keep their shape well in the microwave.

Cook's notes

This dish, filling and richly flavoured is a traditional vegetable from the Dauphiné area in the French Alps, where the combination of cream, garlic and potatoes is a favourite.

Cooking with marinades

Marinating makes a good meal memorable. An aromatic combination of herbs and spices mixed with olive oil, citrus juice or wine both flavours and tenderizes meat, poultry, fish and vegetables.

The purpose of marinating — soaking food in a mixture of liquids and flavourings before cooking — is to improve the flavour of the food and tenderize it, if necessary. All types of meat, poultry, firm white fish and even oily fish can be marinated, as well as vegetables, particularly those with an absorbent texture. Combined with microwaving, a marinade can be very effective.

Why marinate?

The speed of microwave cooking does not lend itself to tenderizing food. Although microwaving on a lower power does help, marinating is an even more effective answer, allowing the acid-based liquids to break down any tough fibres. Marinating also allows flavours to thoroughly blend; not always possible during brief microwaving.

Adding colour is another bonus. Using a colouring agent in the marinade, adds colour which microwaved food may otherwise lack. Finally, marinating is a handy prepare-ahead technique.

How to marinate

Usually the marinade ingredients are combined raw, but they can be microwaved before adding food.

Choose oil, wine vinegar, alcohol or citrus juice and combine with your favourite herbs and spices and — if you like — add vegetables for extra flavouring.

Cover the food and leave at very cool room temperature or refrigerate food in a hot climate or when marinating for over four hours. Allow to come to room temperature before microwaving. If food is not completely covered turn it occasionally to coat.

Take extra advantage of all the added goodness by serving the marinade as a sauce.

Minted Lamb Kebabs

Minted lamb kebabs

16 mins

Standing time: 3 none

450g / 1lb neck fillets or boneless leg of lamb, cut into bite sized cubes
6 button onions
6 small cherry tomatoes, or 3 tomatoes, halved
1 small green pepper, seeded and cut into bite-sized pieces
1 small yellow pepper, seeded and cut into bite-sized pieces

MINT MARINADE
125ml / 4fl oz cider or apple juice
20ml / 4tsp red wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
10ml / 2tsp chopped fresh mint or 5ml / 1tsp dried
1 bay leaf
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the marinade ingredients, seasoning to taste with pepper. Place the lamb in a shallow dish and add the marinade. Stir well to make sure all the lamb is coated, cover and leave to marinate for ½-1 hour.
2 Place the onions in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Remove the lamb from the marinade with a slotted spoon. Thread the lamb on to four large or eight small wooden or bamboo skewers, alternating the onions, tomatoes and red and yellow peppers decoratively.
4 Place the kebabs on a microwave roasting rack and baste liberally with the marinade. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 14-16 minutes or until the lamb is cooked according to taste. Turn the skewers four times during microwaving, and baste with the marinade. Leave to stand for 3 minutes before serving.

VARIATION
Use other seasonal fresh vegetables for the kebabs, such as slices of courgette, chunks of aubergine or whole button mushrooms or baby sweetcorns.

USEFUL MARINADES

Spicy orange marinade

75ml / 5tbls dry sherry
60ml / 4tbls fresh orange juice
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
30ml / 2tbls wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
7.5ml / 1½tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed (optional)

Beat together all the marinade ingredients and use with poultry, veal and pork.

VARIATION
Oriental Marinade: use soy sauce instead of orange juice; omit zest.

Chilli red wine marinade

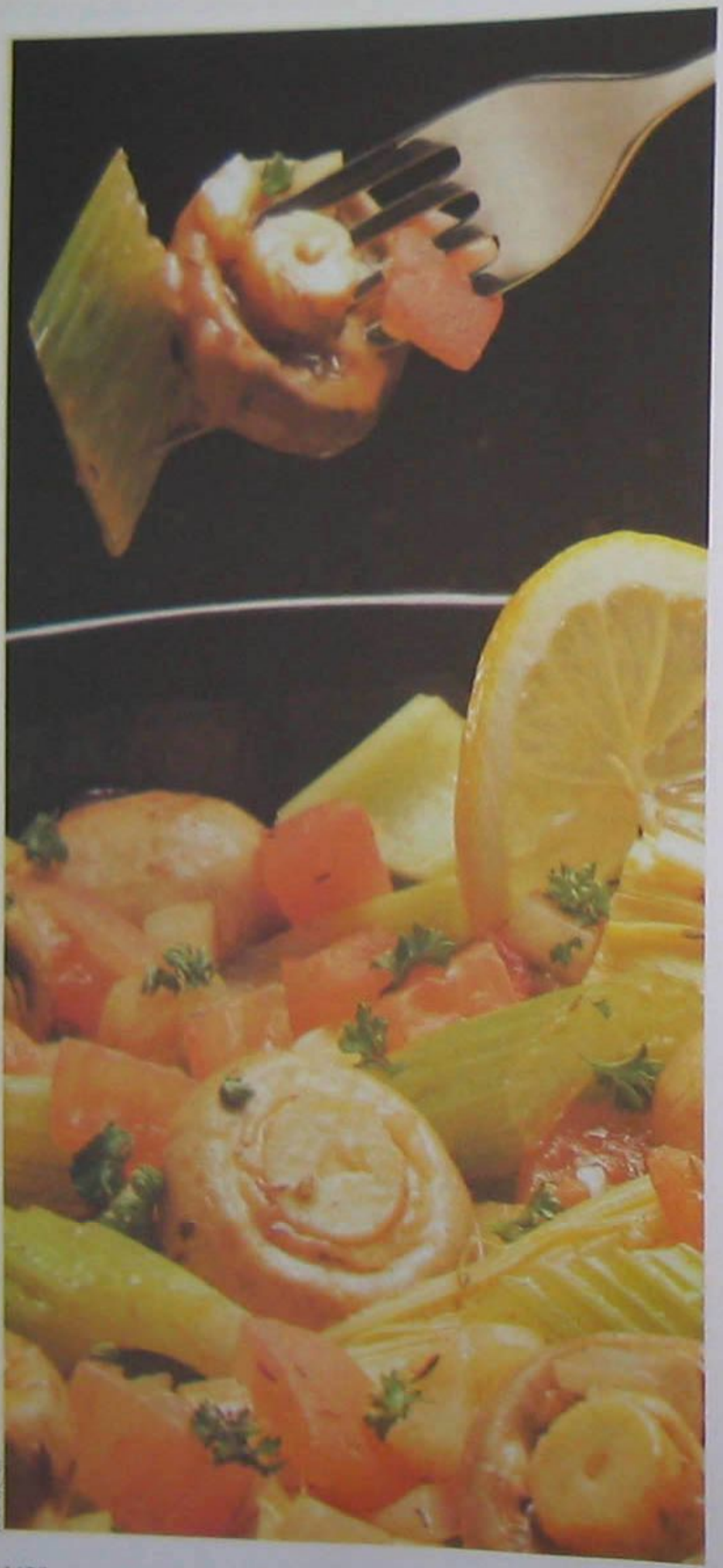
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls wine or tarragon vinegar
150ml / ¼pt red wine
5ml / 1tsp celery salt
45ml / 3tbls tomato ketchup or purée
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
few drops of Tabasco sauce (optional)

Beat together all the marinade ingredients and use with beef and lamb; also good with rich meats like venison and hare and game birds.

Herby cider marinade

30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls cider vinegar
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
125ml / 4fl oz dry cider
5ml / 1tsp fresh rosemary or 2.5ml / ½tsp dried

Beat together all the marinade ingredients and use with white and oily fish, also chicken, veal and pork. For a richer marinade omit the herbs and add 15ml / 1tbls runny honey.



Marinated vegetables

14 mins

Standing time: none

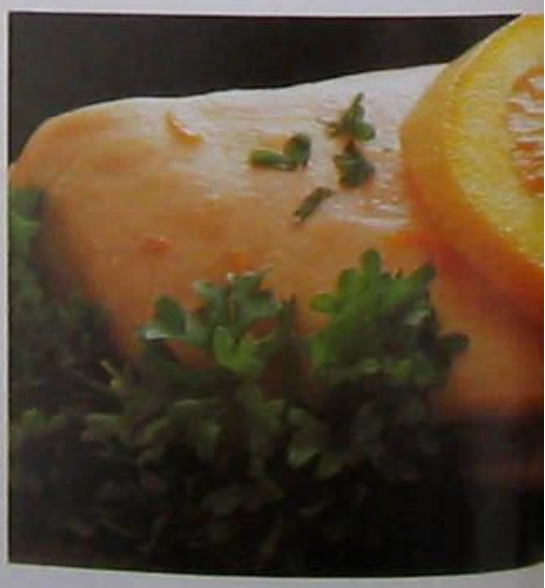
1 large onion, chopped
225g / 8oz leeks, cut into 5cm / 2in pieces and sliced lengthways
4 celery stalks, sliced diagonally
225g / 8oz button mushrooms
1 garlic clove, crushed
4 tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped
chopped parsley and lemon slices, to garnish

MARINADE
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
125ml / 4fl oz dry white wine
15ml / 1tbls tomato paste or purée
10ml / 2tsp chopped fresh thyme or 5ml / 1tsp dried
pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the onion, leeks, celery, mushrooms and garlic in a large bowl and stir together well.
2 Mix the oil with the wine, tomato paste, thyme and pepper to taste. Pour over the vegetables and toss well to coat. Cover and leave to marinate for 1 hour, stirring twice.
3 Add the tomatoes, mixing well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, or until tender, stirring twice.

Left: *Marinated Vegetables*
Below: *Tangy Chicken*



4 Allow to cool slightly, then serve warm, sprinkled with chopped parsley and garnished with lemon slices. Serve with French bread.

VARIATION
In this vegetable dish, fresh tomatoes are best for flavour; but for convenience, substitute 227g / 8oz can peeled tomatoes.

Tangy chicken

11 mins

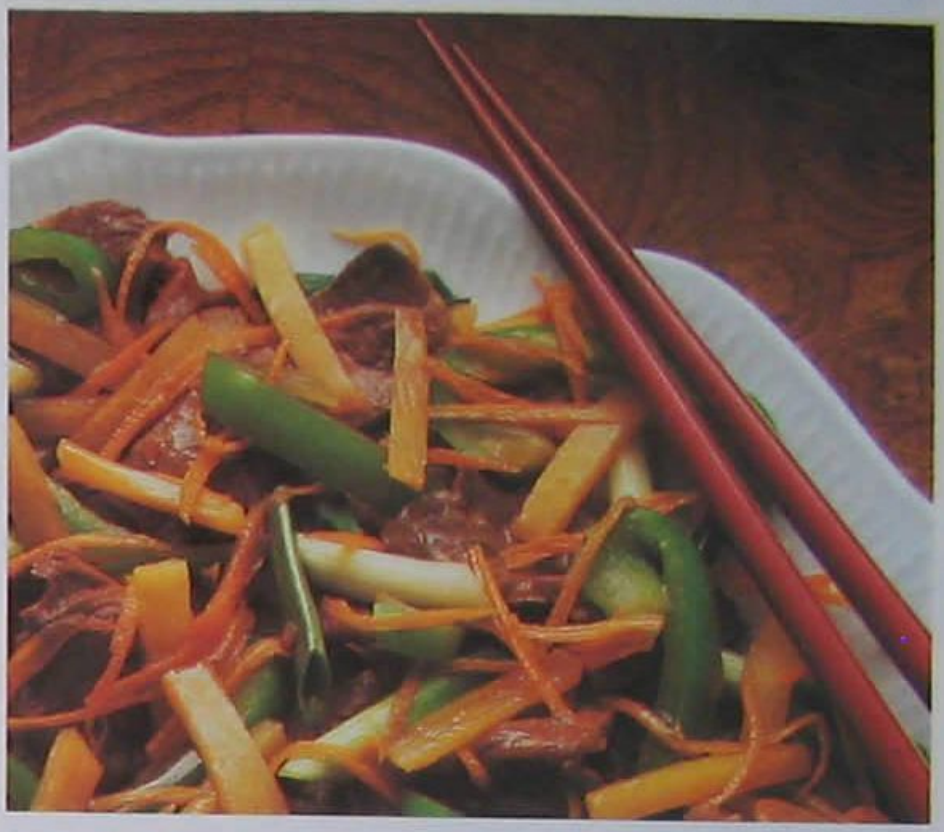
Standing time: none

4 small chicken breasts on the bone, skinned
4 orange slices
chopped parsley, to garnish

CITRUS MARINADE
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
60ml / 4tbls water
black pepper
pinch of garlic powder
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the marinade ingredients in a bowl at 100% (High) 1-2 minutes, until hot.
2 Place the chicken in a shallow dish and pour over the hot marinade. Cover; chill for 1-2 hours.
3 Top the chicken breasts with the orange slices. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes, or until the chicken is tender and no longer pink, rearranging and basting twice.



Mandarin beef

6 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz sirloin steak, 2.5cm / 1in thick, in thin strips
230g / 8oz can sliced bamboo shoots, drained and cut into matchstick strips
1 green pepper, seeded and sliced into matchstick strips
2 small carrots, coarsely grated
½ bunch spring onions, sliced thickly diagonally

MARINADE
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
1.5-2.5ml / ¼-½tsp finely chopped dried red chillies
pinch of ground ginger

SERVES 3-4

1 Mix together all the marinade ingredients in a bowl and add the beef. Stir well to make sure the meat is well coated, cover and leave to marinate for 15 minutes.
2 Place the beef and marinade in a shallow 10 × 8in / 25 × 20cm casserole with the prepared vegetables and stir well.
3 Cover the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the beef is no longer pink and the vegetables are just tender but still slightly crisp. Stir once, halfway through microwaving time. Serve with egg noodles.

Microtips

Do not add salt to marinades as it draws the natural juices out of meat and vegetables. Use only pepper then season with salt after microwaving, if wished.

Speedy chicken suppers

Chicken is so convenient and popular that it's a natural choice for family meals. Ring the changes with these quick and easy microwave recipes for mouthwatering dishes — in under 30 minutes!

Chicken pieces are readily available, economical and a firm favourite with the whole family. What's more, they microwave beautifully in a matter of minutes, staying tender and juicy.

Since chicken does not brown in the microwave, you may prefer to remove the skin before you cook it. (This also helps to cut calories.) A sauce, glaze or crispy coating may be added to enhance the flavour and appearance of the chicken. Covering with grease-proof or non-stick baking paper helps to cut down any splattering that may occur during cooking and also helps to keep the chicken moist and succulent.

Frozen chicken pieces are a wonderfully handy standby. Always make sure that they are thoroughly thawed before you use them, however. See Freezer notes, page 1463.

When the chicken has had the minimum cooking time, check to see if it is done. To do this, pierce the meatiest part of the joint with a sharp knife. If the meat is no

Chicken Dandy

longer pink and the juices run clear, the chicken is done. If there is any sign of pinkness in the meat or juices, return the chicken to the microwave for a further minute or two and test it again.

Liven up your range of chicken dishes with the recipes here. For a complete meal in less than half an hour, try Chicken Dandy, the microwave version of traditional Maryland Chicken, a treat for the whole family. For a quick snack, served hot or cold, Zippy drumsticks are just delicious. Tarragon chicken is an impressive dish, fit for a special occasion and Quick chicken crisp combines the added flavour of stuffing with the speed and convenience of chicken pieces.

Chicken dandy

23½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

4 even-sized baking potatoes (weighing 550g / 1¼lb) scrubbed and pierced
8 chicken drumsticks
43g / 1½oz packet seasoned coating mix (Southern fried flavour)
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
15g / ½oz butter
90ml / 6tbls milk
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls single cream
1 banana
2 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and stretched
watercress to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Arrange potatoes on absorbent paper on a flat plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, or until potatoes are just soft; rotating and turning them over after 5 minutes. Wrap in foil and stand for 5 minutes.

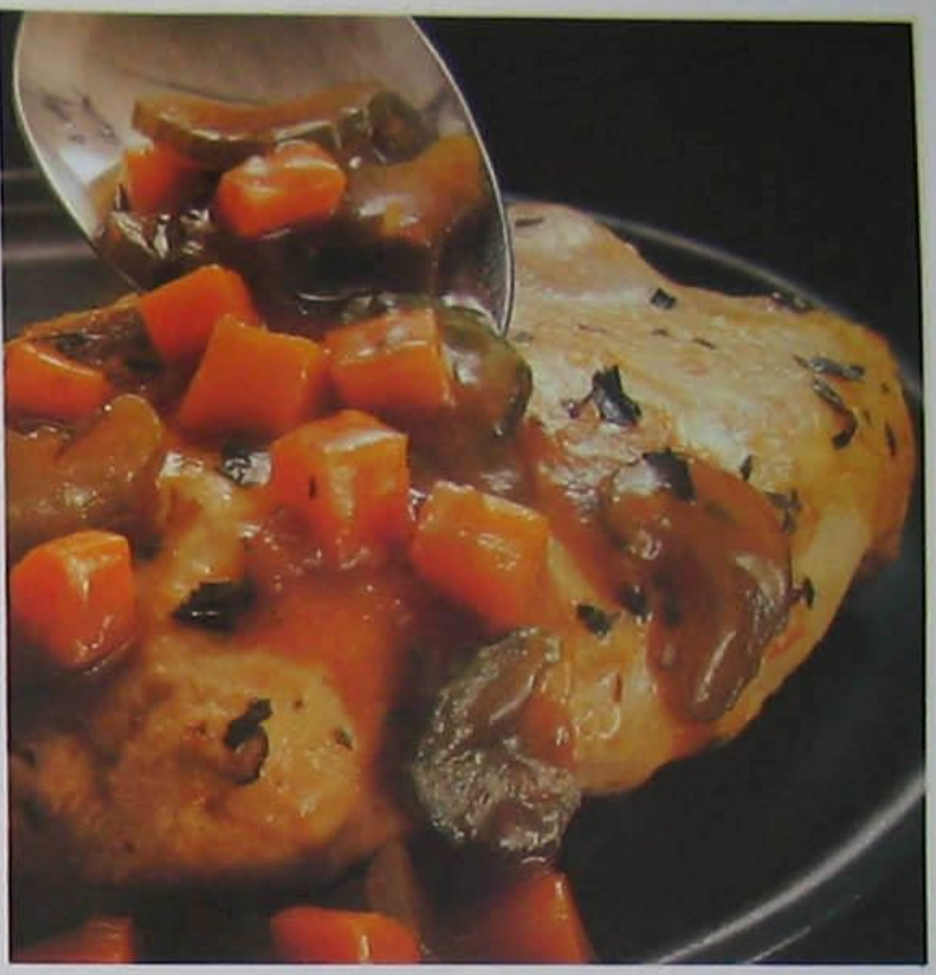
2 Coat drumsticks with two-thirds of the coating mix and arrange them on a roasting rack with the meatiest portions to the outside. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes.

3 Turn drumsticks over and sprinkle with remaining coating mix. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 5-6 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked and the meat and juices are no longer pink. Cover loosely and stand for 5 minutes.

4 Mix sweetcorn and flour, butter, milk, salt and pepper in a bowl. Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until thickened, stirring once. Stir in the cream.

5 Peel the banana and cut into four pieces; wrap each piece in a half rasher of bacon and secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Arrange on a plate lined with absorbent paper. Cover with another piece of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until bacon is cooked and the banana is hot, turning once.

6 Meanwhile, cut a cross in the top of each potato and arrange the potatoes on serving plates with the sweetcorn, drumsticks, bacon and banana roll and watercress.



Tarragon Chicken

Tarragon chicken

17 mins

Standing time: none

Impress your guests with this delicious chicken dish. Although it is speedy to make, it looks as though you've spent hours in the kitchen.

4 boned chicken breasts
2 carrots, finely diced
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 chicken stock cube
45ml / 3tbls boiling water
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp dried tarragon
pinch of garlic powder
15-30ml / 1-2tbls dry sherry
30ml / 2tbls single cream or soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Place carrot, celery and butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until soft; stir once.

2 Dissolve the stock cube in the

boiling water and make up to 275ml / ½pt with cold water. Stir stock into the vegetables and add flour, herbs and sherry.

3 Pour the vegetables into a shallow dish and arrange the chicken on top. Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes. Remove chicken and stir vegetables well. Replace chicken, turned over, on top. Microwave for a further 6-8 minutes, until the chicken is cooked and the sauce has thickened.

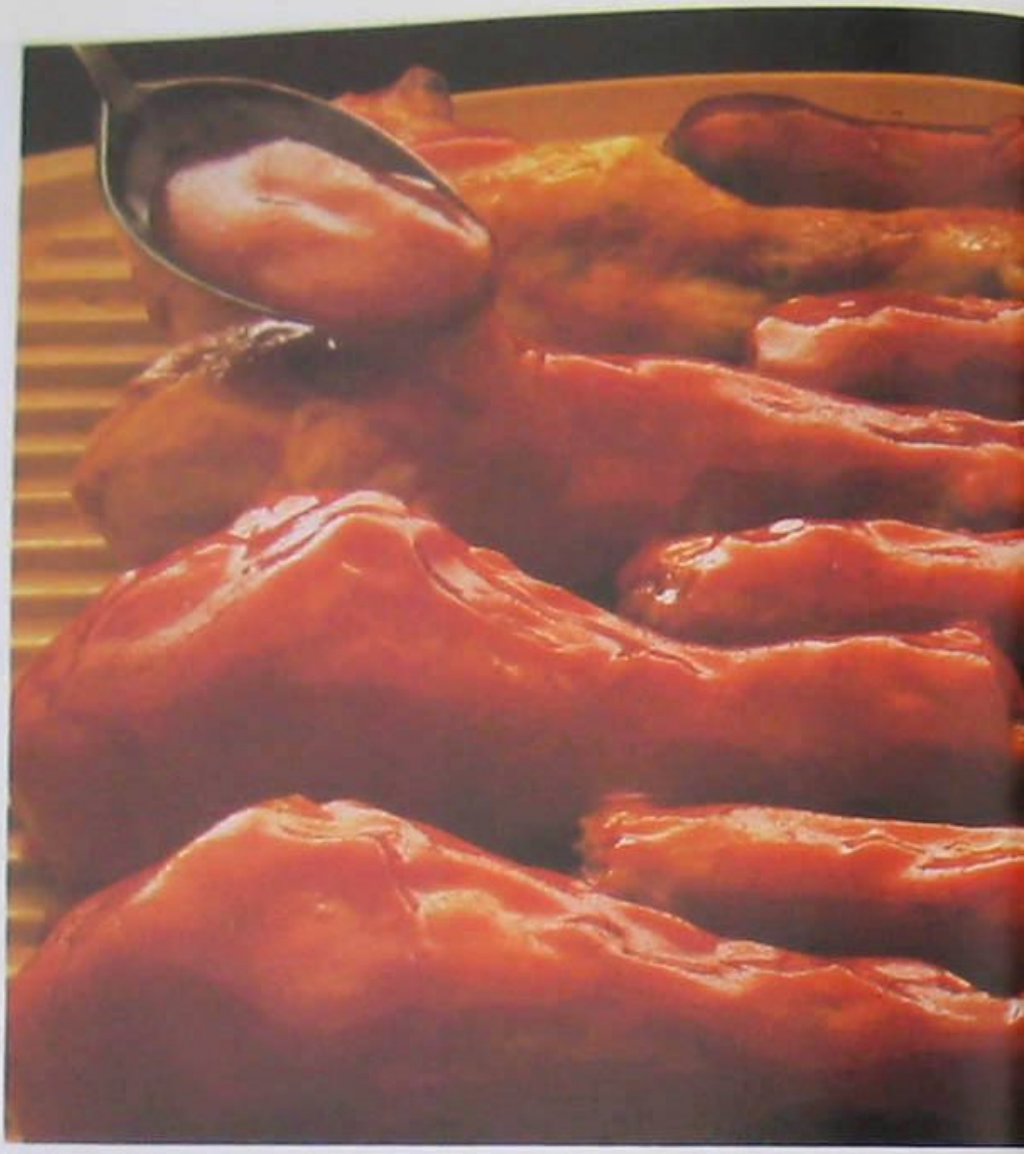
4 Place chicken on a serving plate. Blend cream into the sauce and spoon over the chicken.

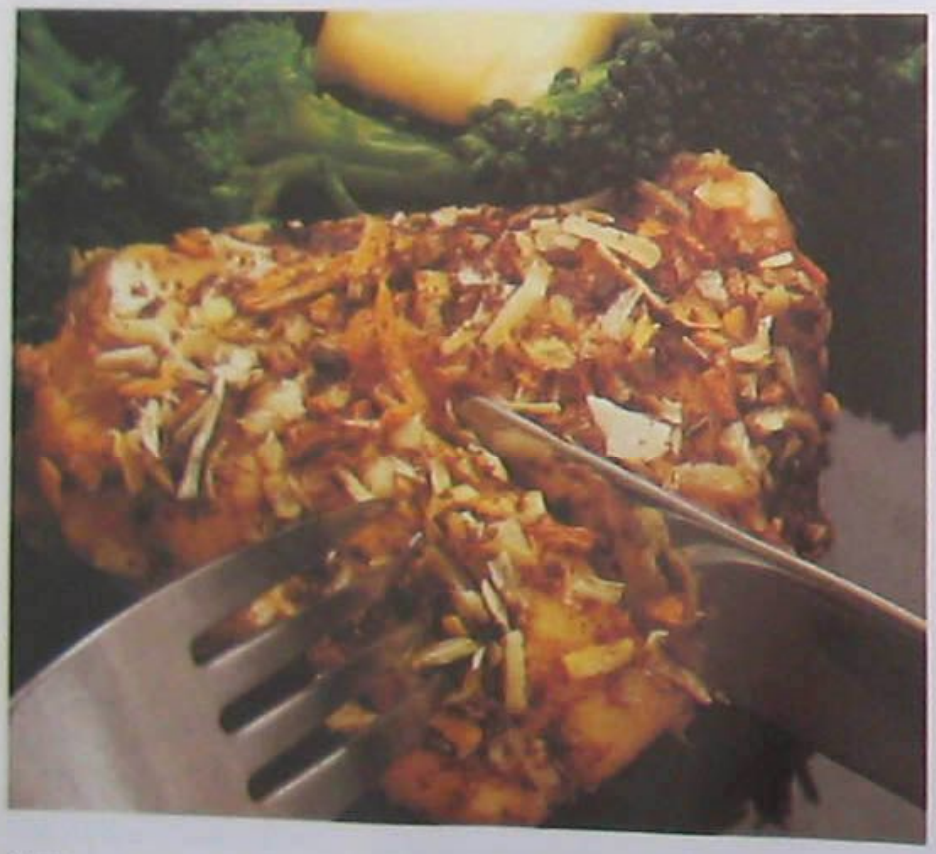
VARIATION

Purée sauce in a blender and spoon it over the chicken; garnish with parsley.

Slimmer's notes

Tarragon chicken is a treat for slimmers. By removing the skin from the chicken breasts, using low-fat yoghurt instead of the cream and keeping the sherry to 15ml / 1tbls, you can still have a really super meal with only 260Cal / 1090kJ per portion.





Chicken and broccoli

18 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

6 chicken thighs
40g / 1½oz packet French Onion soup mix
500g / 1lb 2oz broccoli spears
60ml / 4tbls water
butter, to serve

SERVES 3-4

1 Coat chicken with soup mix, patting it all over the surface of the meat. Arrange coated chicken around the outer edge of a large dish, meatiest parts to outside.

2 Cut off 5-7.5cm / 2-3in of the broccoli stalks. Thinly peel the remaining stalk to where it branches into florets.

Above: *Zippy Drumsticks*
Left: *Chicken and Broccoli*

3 Arrange broccoli in the middle of the plate, with the heads towards the centre. Sprinkle broccoli with water. Cover the dish.

4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 18-27 minutes, or until the chicken and broccoli are tender. Rotate dish half a turn and rearrange chicken and broccoli after 10 minutes.

5 Stand 1-2 minutes. Top the broccoli with butter and serve.

Microtips

Standing times for chicken pieces vary according to the size of the portion. Small wings or drumsticks need no standing time, while chicken quarters should stand for 5 minutes. Always test after standing and microwave for a further 1-2 minutes if necessary.

Zippy drumsticks

12¼ mins

Standing time: none

Serve with microwaved jacket potatoes and a cooked vegetable for a quick main meal, or try the drumsticks with hot garlic bread.

8 chicken drumsticks

BARBECUE SAUCE

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
150g / 5oz tomato ketchup or sauce
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp bottled smoky barbecue sauce (optional)
pinch of grated nutmeg
pinch of ground allspice
pinch of garlic powder

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

A baster, as shown in step 4, is a handy utensil to use to draw excess juice from a roasting rack. The juice can either be used to baste the meat, or discarded.

How to microwave Zippy drumsticks

Place *butter in a jug; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, or until melted. Stir in ketchup, sugar, lemon juice, barbecue sauce (if using), spices and garlic.*

Arrange *drumsticks on a roasting rack, meaty parts to the outside. Spoon over a third of the sauce. Cover with non-stick baking paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes.*

Turn *drumsticks over and coat with another third of the sauce. Re-cover and microwave for a further 6-7 minutes, or until the meat is tender and juices no longer pink.*

Drain *off excess juice. Spoon remaining sauce over drumsticks and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for a further 1-2 minutes to heat the sauce.*

Quick chicken crisp

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
1 egg
3 slices brown bread, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
½ chicken stock cube
65ml / 2½fl oz boiling water
4 chicken portions (1.1-1.4kg / 2½-3lb)

COATING
60ml / 4tbls golden, or browned breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

The bread and vegetable layer is quite moist and soft. For extra crispness, spread bread cubes evenly on a flat plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until dry, stirring every minute.

Chicken 'n' potato supper

26¼ mins

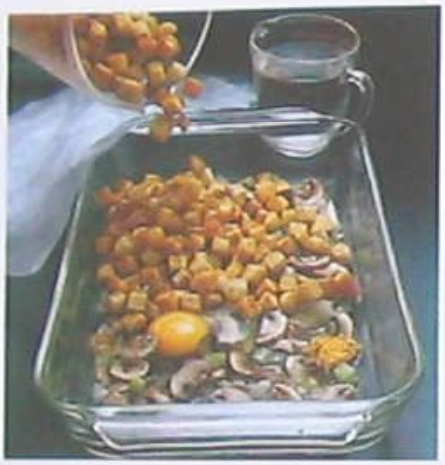
Standing time: none

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
8 chicken pieces, (weighing about 1.1-1.4kg / 2½-3lb)
Microwave seasoning to sprinkle
450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into matchstick strips
90ml / 6tbls water
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp snipped chives

SERVES 4

How to microwave Quick chicken crisp

Combine *mushrooms, onion, celery and butter in a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.*



Add *egg and cubed bread to the cooked vegetables and stir well to mix in the egg. Dissolve the stock cube in boiling water and pour over the stuffing mixture.*

Combine *golden breadcrumbs, parsley and seasoning on a piece of greaseproof paper. Coat the chicken with crumbs and place on stuffing with meatiest portions to outside.*

Cover *loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 16-20 minutes. Rearrange chicken 2 or 3 times during cooking. Stand for 5 minutes. Test for doneness. Serve with a green salad.*

1 Place butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted.

2 Arrange chicken pieces on a plate, skin side down. Brush with half the melted butter and sprinkle with Microwave seasoning. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, rearranging after 5 minutes. Drain thoroughly.

3 Place the potatoes in a bowl together with the water. Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes or until tender. Drain potatoes and stir in soured cream, pepper and chives.

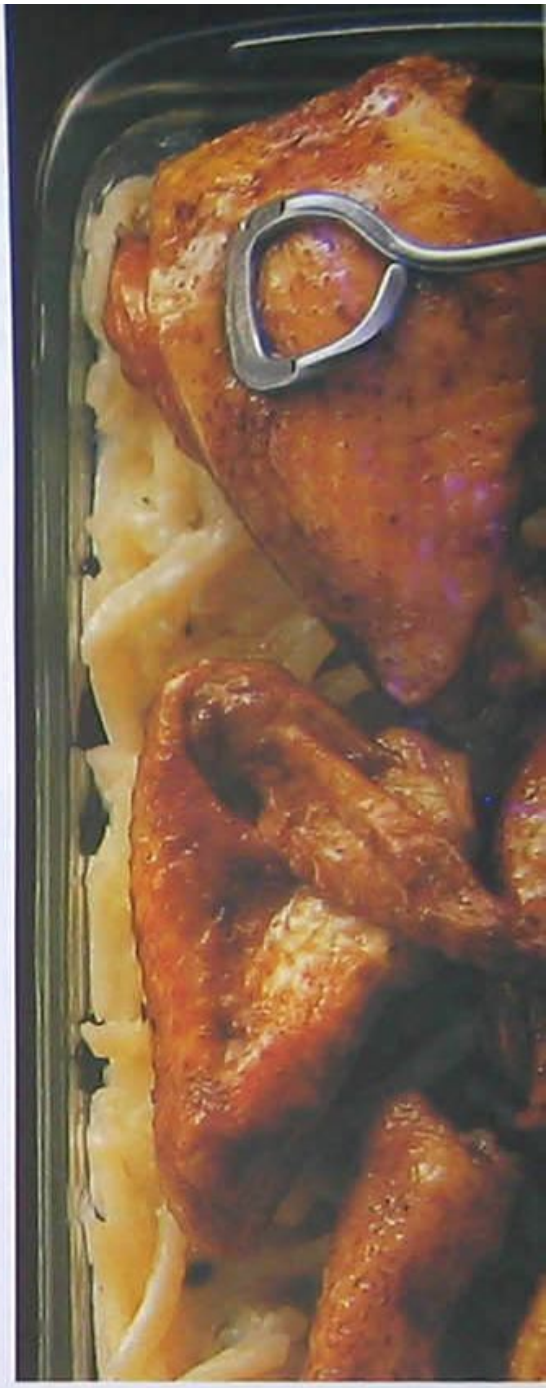
4 Turn the potatoes into a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in rectangular dish. Arrange chicken pieces, skin side up, on top with the meatiest parts to the outside of dish. Brush chicken with remaining butter and sprinkle with seasoning.

5 Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until chicken is cooked. Season and serve.

VARIATION

Use paprika or turmeric if Microwave seasoning is unobtainable.

Right: *Chicken 'n' Potato Supper*
Below: *Quick Chicken Crisp*



Freezer notes

To thaw chicken pieces in the microwave, place meatiest parts to the outer edge. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) turning and separating once or twice. Microwave for minimum recommended time (see below), then cover with foil and stand for 10 minutes. If necessary, microwave for a further 1-2 minutes.

For 2 × 225g / 8oz thigh or breast portions allow 7-9 minutes; for 4 × 225g / 8oz portions allow 14-17 minutes. For 2 × 75-100g / 3-4oz drumsticks, allow 4-5 minutes; and 7-8 minutes for four.

Bread puddings 2

Summer or winter, there's a bread pudding to fit the bill. This selection of new and traditional puddings should leave you spoiled for choice for desserts and teatime treats.

This wide variety of cold desserts will leave you with no doubt as to the versatility of the humble loaf for use in sweet dishes.

Some of the recipes here double as teatime goodies as well as puddings — Chocolate Bread Pudding and the Pineapple Cherry Ring are just as delicious either way. While all the dishes can be served cold, some especially the Queen of Puddings and Apricot Towers make tasty hot desserts.

Remember the fragrant lemon aroma of Queen of Puddings from as far back as childhood — the speed of the microwave cooker makes fond recollections such as this easy to restore all over again in a fraction of the time.

Apart from being delicious, these recipes are speedy and, above all, economical. Use up slightly stale bread — in some recipes it is more suitable than fresh, as it is more absorbent. But, just because they contain bread, it doesn't mean that these dishes are unsohpisticated. Take the elegant and unusual brown bread ice cream; on its own it's an irresistible family pudding, but add a tot of liqueur or a rich sauce, and you elevate it to dinner party dessert status.

Not strictly a 'bread' pudding, but very similar in texture Pineapple Cherry Ring makes use of a scone mix instead of bread as a base for a sumptuous dessert / cake.

Harvest pudding

6 mins

Standing time: none

8-10 small slices of stale bread, crusts removed
whipped cream and blackberries, to decorate

FILLING
450g / 1lb plums, halved, stoned and quartered
1 large ripe pear, peeled, quartered, cored and sliced
50ml / 2fl oz unsweetened orange juice
350g / 12oz blackberries
30-45ml / 2-3tbls caster sugar

SERVES 4

1 Line a 750ml / 1½pt loaf dish with stretch wrap, allowing a generous amount to drape over the sides all round. Line the base and sides of the dish with most of the bread slices, cutting them as necessary to fit and making sure there are no gaps.
2 Place plums and pear in a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl. Add the orange juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring twice, or until the fruit is soft. Add the blackberries and sugar and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for a further 2-3 minutes, until very hot, stirring twice.
3 Spoon the fruit mixture into the lined dish. Cover with the remaining bread. Sieve the remaining fruit mixture and spoon some over the top layer of bread. Cover the pudding with the overhanging stretch wrap.
4 Place a dish or piece of cardboard which fits just inside the rim of the dish on top of the pudding and weight down. Cool then chill overnight. Chill the remaining fruit purée.
5 To serve, uncover the pudding and turn out on to a serving dish. Peel off the stretch wrap. Spoon the fruit purée over the unsoaked bread. Decorate with whipped cream and blackberries and serve.

VARIATION
Add 2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon to the plums before cooking.

Chocolate bread pudding

14 mins

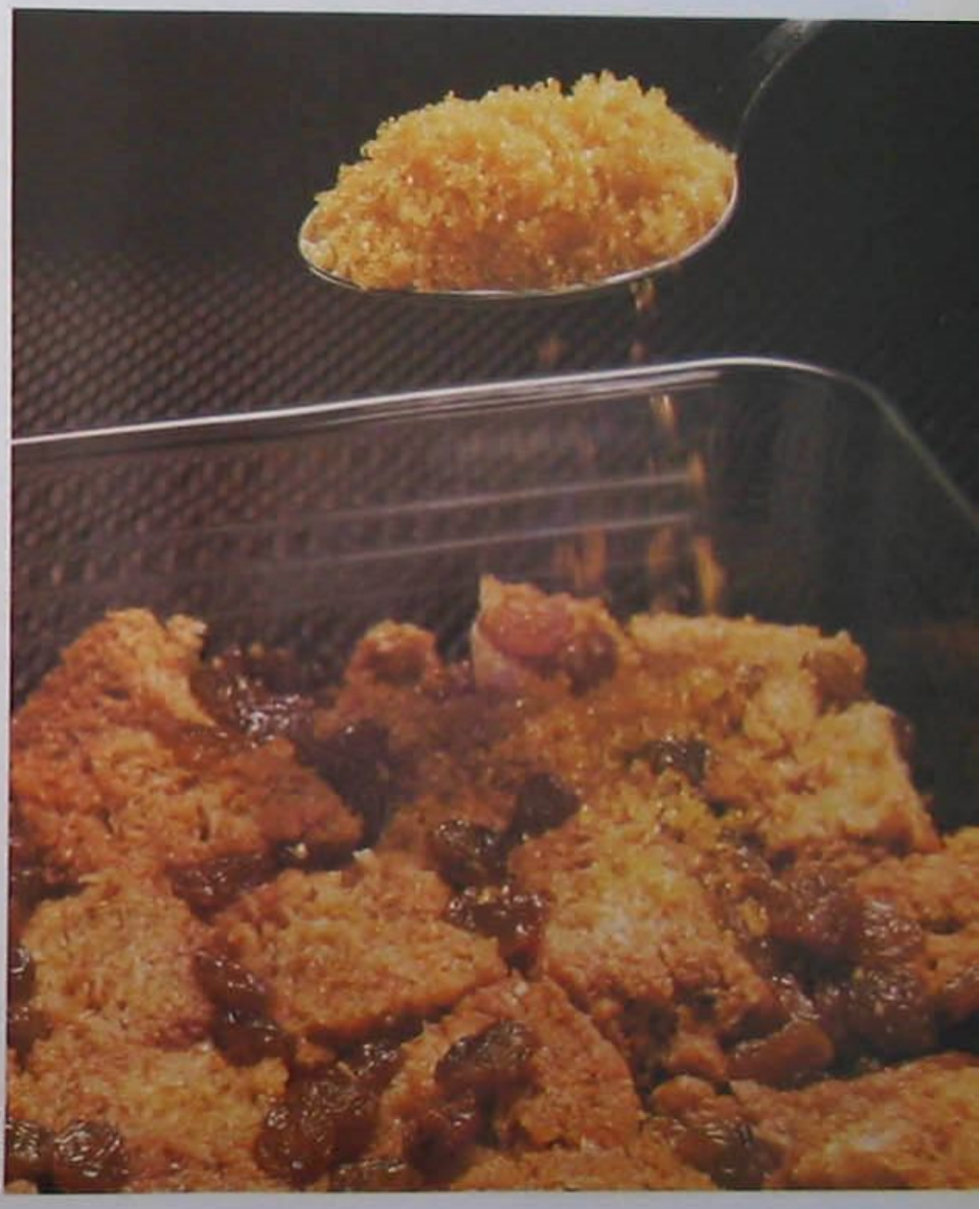
Standing time: none

6 pieces of thick-sliced bread, buttered and crusts removed
50g / 2oz sultanas
45ml / 3tbls caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
275ml / ½pt milk
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
30ml / 2tbls drinking chocolate
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar
25g / 1oz plain chocolate, grated (optional)

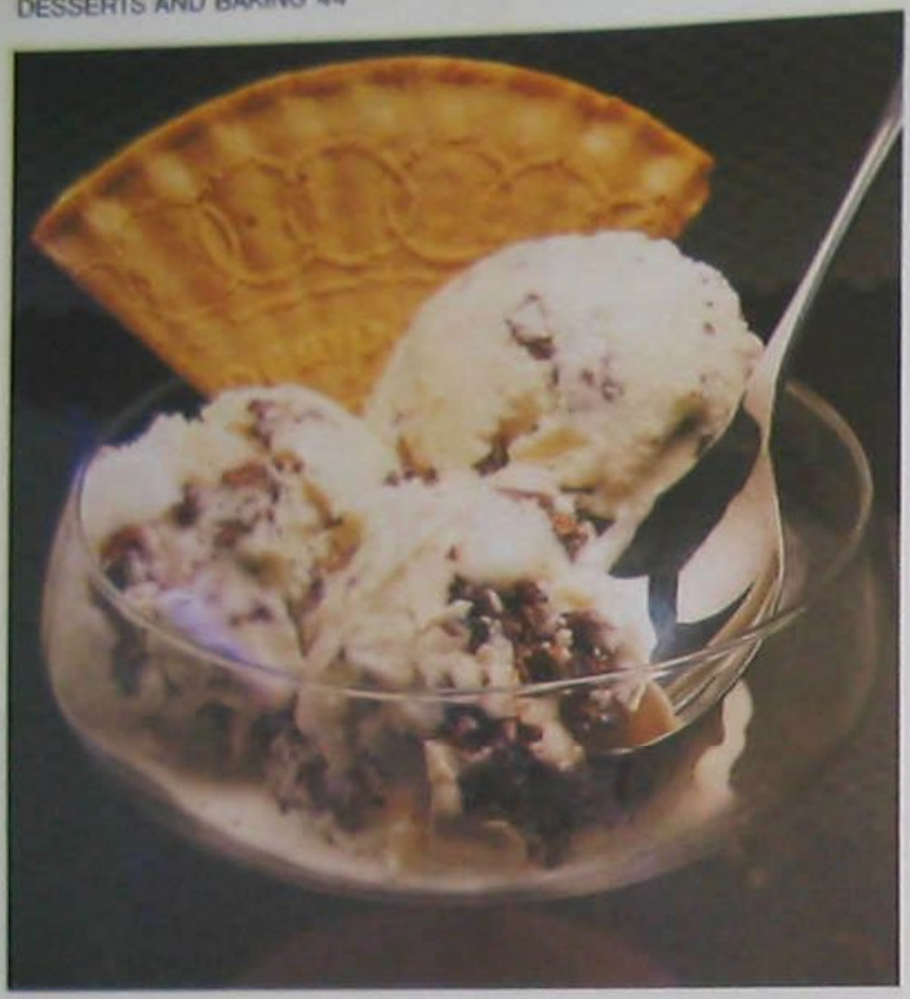
SERVES 4

1 Cut the bread into 2.5cm / 1in squares and place in a 20 × 25cm / 8 × 10in dish. Sprinkle the sultanas over the top.
2 Beat the caster sugar and eggs together. Heat the milk in a tall jug at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until almost boiling. Add the vanilla and drinking chocolate, then whisk the milk into the eggs and sugar. Pour over the bread and leave to soak for 15 minutes.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12-14 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn several times, until just firm in the centre. Sprinkle with demerara sugar and brown under a hot grill. Leave to cool. Sprinkle with grated chocolate if liked before serving.

Far left: *Harvest Pudding*
Below: *Chocolate Bread Pudding*



RAY DUNS



Crunchy bread ice cream

15¼ mins

Standing time: none

This rum and chocolate ice-cream is a variation of the delicious, traditional brown bread ice cream. Serve it with fan wafers.

30ml / 2tbls dark rum
50g / 2oz currants
100g / 4oz plain chocolate
50g / 2oz coarse brown breadcrumbs
3 egg yolks
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
100g / 4oz caster sugar
275ml / ½pt single cream
275ml / ½pt double cream

SERVES 4

1 Pour the rum over the currants in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds (see Microtips, right). Reserve.
2 Break the chocolate into small pieces into a bowl. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 2½-2¾ minutes, or until just melted.
3 Place the breadcrumbs on a sheet of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until crisp. Stir the breadcrumbs once to ensure even crisping.
4 Using a fork, stir the crumbs into the chocolate. Spread over a piece of greaseproof paper and leave to set.
5 Beat the egg yolks, cornflour and sugar together. Microwave the single cream, in a covered bowl, at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until hot. Stir into the egg mixture.
6 Stand the bowl of creamy egg custard in a dish of water, making sure the water comes above the level of the custard. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the custard will coat the back of a spoon.
7 Remove from the water and stand in a bowl of cold water to cool. Whisk the double cream until thick and standing in soft peaks. Fold into the cold custard. Pour into a freezer container, cover and freeze for about 1½-2 hours, until almost solid.
8 Whisk the ice cream to break it up. Fold in the soaked currants and the chocolate-coated crumbs. Spoon back into the freezer container. Return to the freezer and freeze until solid.

Above: *Crunchy Bread Ice Cream*

Microtips

Because of the high sugar and alcohol content of the rum and currant mixture it is important not to leave this mixture unattended in the microwave, or to heat it for longer than stated in the recipe. If your microwave does not have precise controls for seconds, it is advisable to heat the rum and currants in the conventional way to avoid burning.

Apricot towers

16½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

425g / 15oz can apricots in natural juice
275ml / ½pt single cream
2 egg yolks
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
75g / 3oz fresh brown or white breadcrumbs

SERVES 6

1 Lightly oil six 150ml / ¼pt individual dishes. Drain the juice from the apricots and arrange the fruit in the base of the dishes.
2 Pour the cream into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until hot. Beat the egg yolks, cinnamon and sugar together and mix with the cream. Add the breadcrumbs and leave to soak for 15 minutes.
3 Divide the mixture evenly between the dishes. Arrange in a ring on the floor of the cooker and microwave at 30% (Low) for 15-16 minutes, giving a quarter turn to each dish after half the time.
4 Stand for 3 minutes, then invert on to a dish. Serve cold.

Pineapple cherry ring

8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

This versatile pudding cake has a delicious, sticky topping. It makes a tempting teatime treat or serve for dessert with lightly whipped cream, or stiffly whipped cream mixed with whisked egg white.

225g / 8oz canned crushed pineapple, drained
10 maraschino cherries, chopped
2 × 170g / 6oz packets scone mix
150ml / ¼pt cold water
30ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
50g / 2oz butter
60ml / 4tbls dark soft brown sugar

SERVES 6-8

Cook's notes

Make sure the crushed pineapple is completely drained to prevent the fruit mixture from being too watery. Drain the pineapple in a sieve lined with a double layer of absorbent paper.

Ring the changes by using drained canned apricot halves instead of the pineapple. Try using soaked and drained chopped stoned prunes instead of the maraschino cherries.

How to microwave Pineapple cherry ring

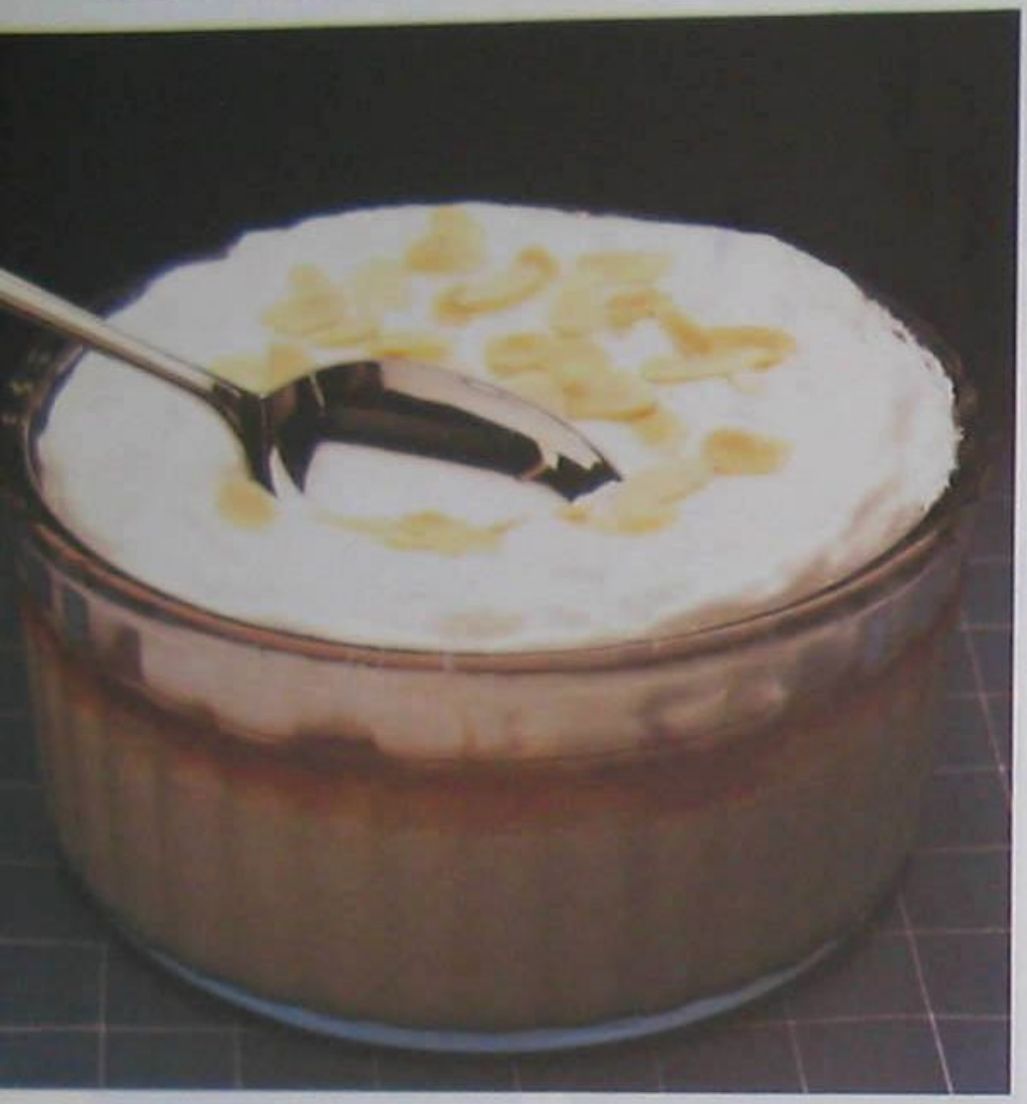
Arrange *crushed pineapple and cherries in the base of a lightly greased 1.4L / 2½pt ring mould. Mix together scone mixture and water. Knead lightly on a floured surface and divide into four equal pieces.*

Mix *together cinnamon and caster sugar and spread on greaseproof paper. Roll each piece of dough to a 25cm / 10in long sausage, coating in the sugar mixture. Cut into 2cm / ¾in lengths. Place pieces on top of fruit.*

Microwave *the butter and brown sugar in a bowl at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir to dissolve sugar, then drizzle over scone pieces in mould.*

Place *dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes giving the dish a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes.*

Leave *to stand for 3 minutes. Cool slightly, then turn out on to a wire rack. Leave until completely cold, then cut into thick slices.*



Danish bread pudding

9½ mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb cooking apples, peeled, quartered, cored and sliced
75g / 3oz caster sugar
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
1 egg, separated
40g / 1½oz butter
50g / 2oz fresh white breadcrumbs
60ml / 4tbls demerara sugar
150ml / ¼pt double cream

SERVES 4

1 Arrange the apples in a bowl, stir in the caster sugar and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until soft and pulpy. Beat well with a fork until smooth. Stir in the vanilla and egg yolk. Leave to cool.
2 Place the butter in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir in the breadcrumbs and demerara sugar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High), for 3-4 minutes stirring twice.
3 Spoon the apple into a glass serving dish. Whisk the cream until thick. Whisk the egg white until it stands in soft peaks, then fold into the cream.
4 Just before serving, sprinkle the sugared crumbs over the apple in a thick layer and top with the frothy cream. Serve immediately.

Queen of Puddings

Cook's notes

In Denmark where this pudding is popular, very dark bread is used instead of the white bread used here. You could try making it with wholemeal breadcrumbs.

Queen of puddings

20 mins

Standing time: none

575ml / 1pt milk
25g / 1oz butter
grated zest of ½ lemon
75g / 3oz caster sugar
100g / 4oz fresh white breadcrumbs
1 egg
2 egg yolks
30ml / 2tbls jam

MERINGUE
2 egg whites
100g / 4oz caster sugar
15ml / 1tbls flaked almonds

SERVES 6

1 Pour the milk into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes, or until just boiling. Stir in the butter, lemon zest and sugar.
2 Lightly grease a 0.8L / 1½pt dish and spread the crumbs evenly in the base. Pour the milk mixture over the breadcrumbs and leave to soak for 15 minutes. Whisk the whole egg and egg yolks with the bread mixture.
3 Microwave the bread and custard mixture at 50% (Medium) for 13-15 minutes, until just set.
4 Place the jam in a cup and soften by microwaving at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute. Spread over the cooked bread mixture.
5 Place the egg whites in a clean, dry bowl and whisk until dry and stiff. Add a third of the sugar and whisk until glossy then fold in the rest of the sugar.
6 Spread meringue over the top. Sprinkle with almonds. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½-4 minutes, turning, once. If liked, brown the meringue under a hot grill. Serve hot or cold.

Microtips

Microwaved meringues have a soft, mallowy consistency. To crisp the top, sprinkle with caster sugar and brown under a hot grill. Remember that sugar browns quickly.

Microwaving pulses

Make more of pulses! With the microwave, turning lentils, chick-peas, red kidney and other beans into mouthwatering pâtés, risottos and casseroles makes for healthy, appetizing eating.

Pulses — peas, beans and lentils — are colourful, inexpensive and packed full of goodness. High in protein, vitamins and fibre — yet remarkably low in fat — they can make an excellent contribution to a healthy diet. Cooking dried pulses by microwave takes just as long as conventional methods, although energy costs are lower. The real time-saving comes in microwaving the cooked or canned pulses into delicious, tempting dishes.

There are many different types of pulses; all the most familiar, such as chick-peas and lentils, can be found dried or canned in supermarkets. Less familiar pulses are found in Asian or West Indian shops or health food stores.

Canned pulses keep well for up to 1 year, dried up to 6 months. Store dried pulses in a sealed container in a cool, dry place.

Preparing pulses

Canned pulses are ready-cooked and simply need tipping into a sieve and rinsing under cold water. Dried pulses must be rinsed in cold water, then soaked before cooking. Soaking replaces some of the moisture removed during the drying process. Split red lentils are an exception as they can be cooked without soaking.

There are two basic soaking methods:

Long cold soak: place the beans in a large bowl and cover with three times the amount of cold water. Cover and soak for at least 4 hours in a cool place, changing the water several times.

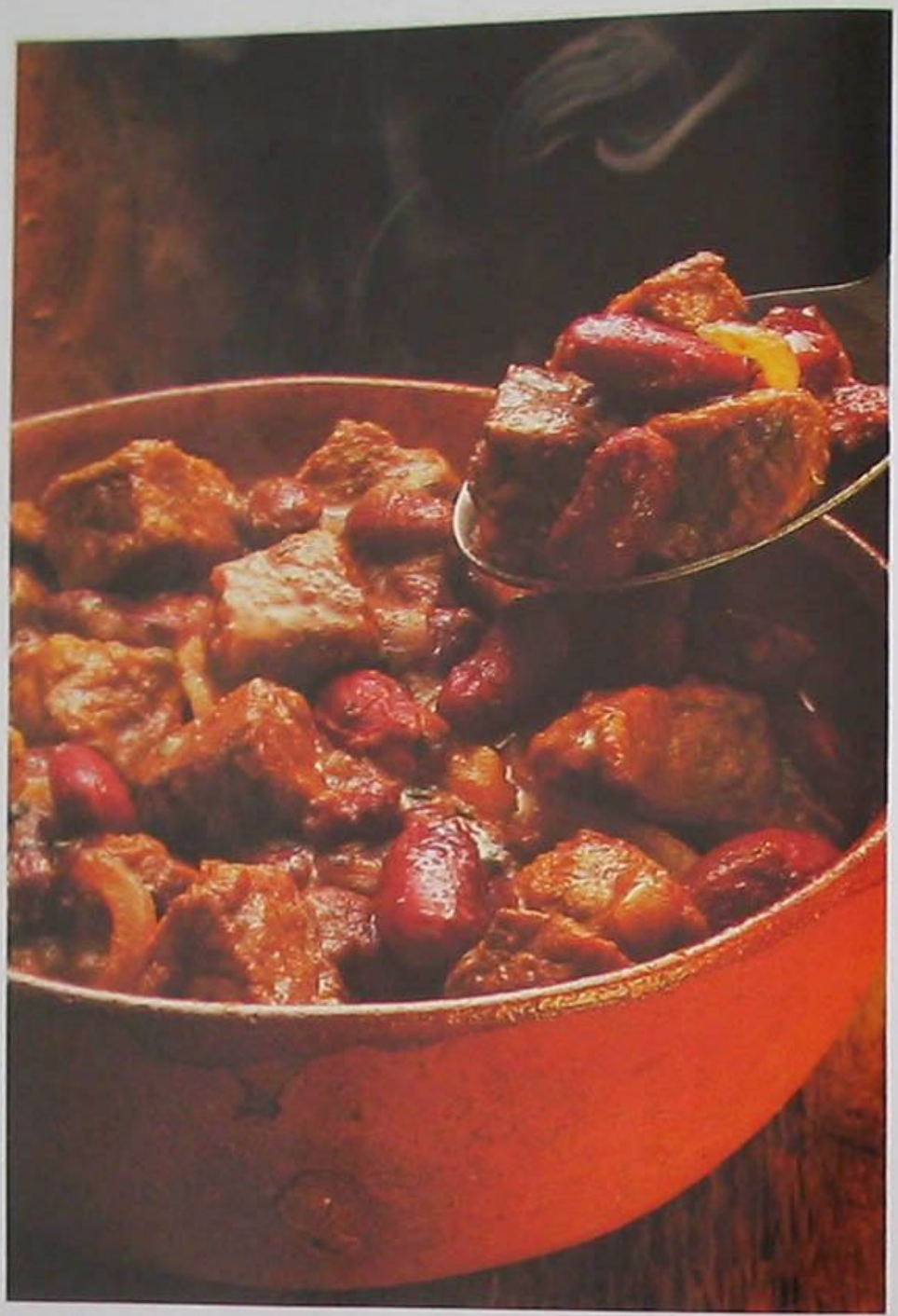
Short hot soak: place the beans in a large pan of water and bring to the boil conventionally. Boil for 3 minutes, then remove from the heat, cover and leave to soak for 40-60 minutes.

Lentil Pâté

Microwaving pulses

Use a large casserole for microwaving pulses to avoid boiling over during cooking. Cook pulses in plenty of fresh water. Add herbs and flavourings like a sprig of rosemary, bay leaf, garlic, onion or celery, if liked, but no salt as this toughens the skins and prevents pulses softening. Always season to taste after cooking.

Cover loosely with a piece of greaseproof or non-stick baking paper while cooking. (Do not use a lid as this encourages boiling over.) Stir regularly — about every 10-15 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes before draining and using in recipes.



Microwave times for cooking dried pulses*

TYPE	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Black beans	1¼-1½ hours
Black-eyed beans	45-60 mins
Butter beans	1¼-1½ hours
Cannellini beans	1¼-1½ hours
Chick-peas	2¼-2½ hours
Flageolet beans	1-1¼ hours
Haricot beans	1¼-1½ hours
Red kidney beans	1¼-1½ hours
Soya beans	3-4 hours
Red lentils**	15-25 mins
Split peas	30-45 mins
Whole brown Lentils	30-45 mins

*Timings are for 450g / 1lb soaked pulses
**Split lentils do not need soaking

How to microwave dried pulses

Soak *450g / 1lb pulses (page 1469); drain. Place in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole with 850ml / 1½pt water. Cover with non-stick baking or greaseproof paper.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) as directed in chart (above) and Cook's notes (right). Stir several times and add boiling water as necessary to cover.*

Test *beans are cooked by piercing with a fork: they should be soft and tender all the way through. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes before using.*

Beefy bean hotpot

70 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / ½lb braising steak, trimmed and cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
425g / 15oz can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
55g / 2oz packet onion soup mix
575ml / 1pt water
1 onion, thinly sliced
45ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
1 garlic clove, crushed
120ml / 8tbls red wine
30ml / 2tbls tomato paste or purée
5ml / 1tsp sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cumin
large pinch of ground allspice
large pinch of cayenne pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a 2.3L/4pt casserole, mixing well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
2 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 1-1¼ hours, or until the beef is tender, stirring four times. Stand for 5 minutes.

Left: *Beefy Bean Hotpot*

Freezer notes

Freeze the cold hotpot in a freezer container for up to 3 months.

To thaw, turn into bowl; microwave at 100% (High) for 13-15 minutes, breaking apart after 6 minutes, then every 3 minutes. Stand, covered, for 4-5 minutes.

Cook's notes

Soaked red kidney beans need hard boiling for 3 minutes at the start of cooking, particularly if they have only been given a short hot soak. This destroys an enzyme they contain, which could otherwise cause a stomach upset.

Canned red kidney beans are precooked and do not require boiling.

Beany risotto

19½ mins

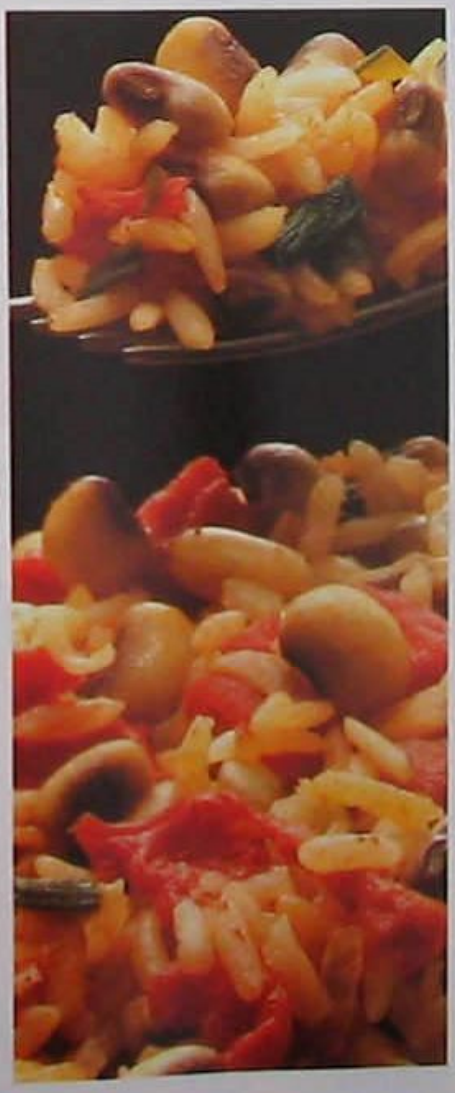
Standing time: 5 mins

2 bacon rashers
1 spring onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
225g / 8oz can tomatoes
100g / 4oz long-grain rice
135ml / 4½fl oz boiling water
salt and pepper
pinch of paprika
pinch of cayenne pepper
400g / 14oz can black-eyed or cannellini beans, drained

SERVES 4

1 Place the bacon on a roasting rack or between a double layer of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until very crisp. Crumble into a large casserole.
2 Add all the remaining ingredients except the beans, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Stir well, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 11-14 minutes, or until the rice is tender, stirring two or three times. Let stand for 5 minutes.
3 Stir the beans into the rice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until heated through, stirring once.

Beany Risotto



VARIATIONS
Use any type of canned beans, such as haricot or chick-peas.

Lentil pâté

1 min

Standing time: none

Serve this rich, soft pâté with wholemeal toast or crispbreads, or with sticks of vegetable 'dippers' for a snack lunch or starter.

30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
1 small onion, grated
1 garlic clove, crushed
50g / 2oz butter
½ vegetable stock cube, crumbled
2 × 396g / 14oz can green or brown lentils, rinsed and well drained, or 450g / 1lb dried lentils, soaked, cooked and drained
pepper
15ml / 1tbls sherry

SERVES 6-8

1 In a small mixing bowl, combine the parsley, onion, garlic, butter and stock cube. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until the butter melts. Stir to mix.
2 Pour into a food processor or blender. Add the remaining ingredients and purée until smooth.
3 Transfer to a bowl and chill.

Slimmer's notes

As a starter for eight, this pâté provides just 110Cal / 460kJ per portion. As a lunch for six, each portion provides 150Cal / 630kJ.

Simmered beans and artichokes

22 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
396g / 14oz can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
396g / 14oz can tomatoes
125fl oz / 4fl oz white wine
15ml / 1tbls soft light brown sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
large pinch of dried marjoram
1 potato (weighing about 175g / 6oz), cut in half lengthways and sliced 6mm / ¼in thick
396g / 14oz can artichoke hearts, drained
salt

TO SERVE
150g / 5oz crushed wheat or bulgar wheat
575ml / 1pt boiling water

SERVES 6

1 Place the wheat in a casserole and add the water. Cover and soak for 30 minutes to soften.
2 Meanwhile, in a large casserole, combine the onion, green pepper, garlic and oil. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once.
3 Stir in the beans, tomatoes, wine, sugar and herbs. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until bubbling at the edges. Stir in the potato and artichokes. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, or until potato is tender, stirring twice.
4 Drain the wheat in a sieve and press out any excess moisture. Season the beans with salt to taste and serve over the wheat.

Microtips

To reheat the wheat after draining, if necessary, turn into a large bowl, cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.

Slimmer's notes

For a satisfying, yet slimming meal that is full of goodness, use water for wine and omit sugar. This gives 185Cal / 775kJ per serving.

Herby bean salad

1½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb black beans, cooked with 1 sprig of rosemary, drained (see Cook's notes)

DRESSING
75ml / 5tbls olive oil
45ml / 3tbls red wine vinegar
1 small onion chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 sprig of fresh rosemary
5ml / 1tsp brown sugar
salt and pepper, to taste

SERVES 6-8

1 Combine the dressing ingredients, in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.
2 Remove the sprig of rosemary and whisk. Pour over the beans and stir well. Serve.

Bean and sausage bake

10½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

1 red-skinned apple, cored and roughly chopped
1 small onion, chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls black treacle
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
1.5ml / ¼tsp made mustard
salt and pepper
425g / 15oz can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
2 × 220g / 7.5oz can curried baked beans
225g / 8oz frankfurters, cut in 12mm / ½in pieces
220g / 7.5oz can pineapple pieces in natural juice, drained

SERVES 4

1 Put the apple, onion and butter or margarine into a large casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring once, until the onion is tender.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until heated through, stirring twice. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

VARIATIONS
Use sliced, cooked chipolata sausages or cubed, cooked ham. A small can of sliced peaches or mandarin segments, drained, can be used instead of pineapple.

Black bean casserole

28 mins

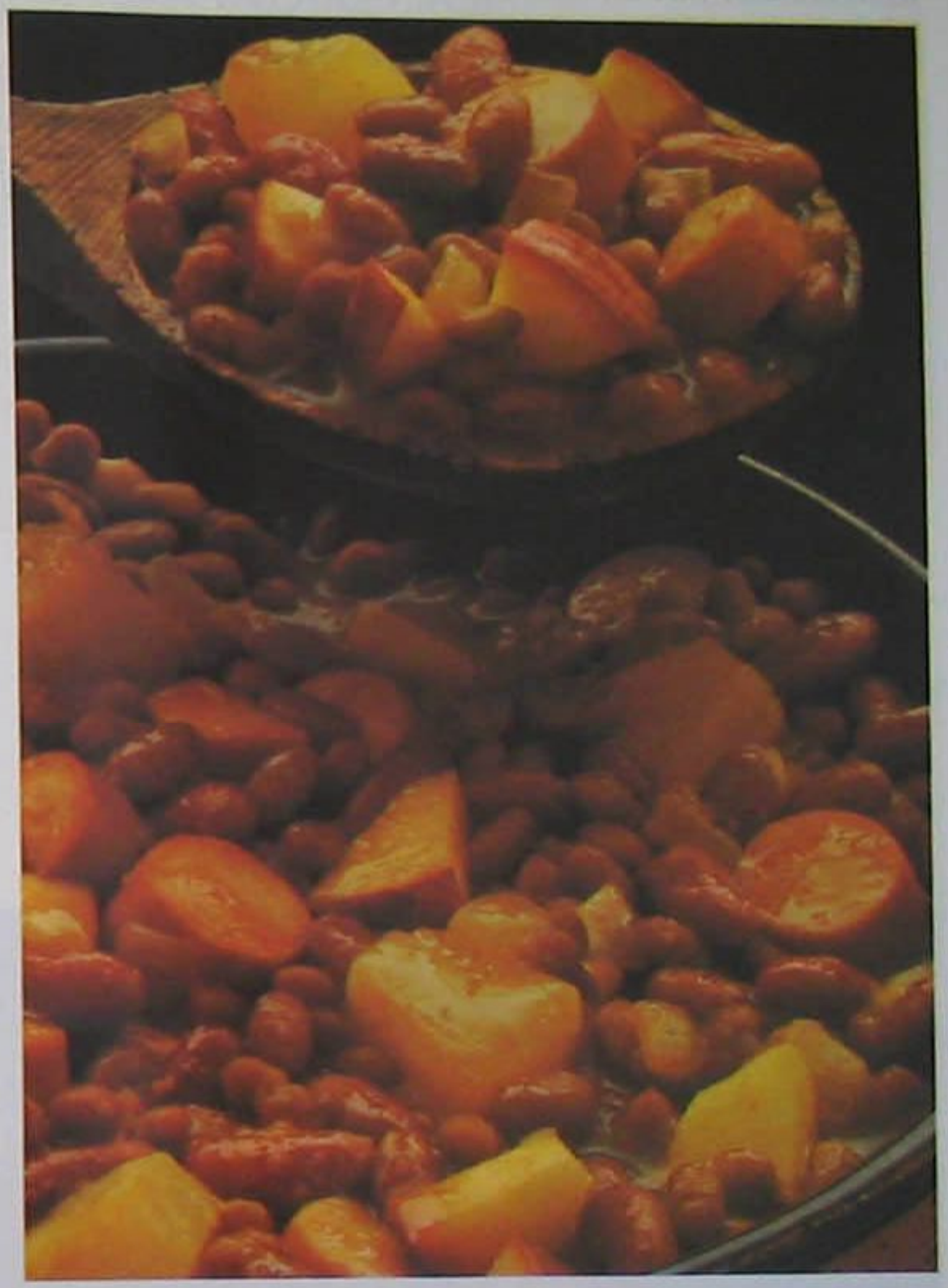
Standing time: none

Serve this dish with crusty bread for a nourishing lunch or supper dish.

30ml / 2tbls olive oil
1 onion, chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
3 small bay leaves
3 garlic cloves, crushed
10ml / 2tsp dried oregano
450g / 1lb black beans, soaked, cooked and drained
850ml / 1½pt water
15ml / 1tbls red wine vinegar
salt and pepper
350ml / 12fl oz water

SERVES 6-8

1 In a 3.4L / 6pt casserole, combine the oil, onion, green pepper, bay leaves, garlic and oregano. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.
2 Add the remaining ingredients. Cover and continue microwaving at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes.
3 Remove 60ml / 4tbls of the bean mixture, mash and return to the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes, or until liquid is thickened slightly and only just covers beans.



Above: *Bean and Sausage Bake*
Left: *Simmered Beans and Artichokes*
Above left: *Herby Bean Salad*

Cook's notes

The time for cooking soaked dried pulses is not included in the recipe time boxes (see chart and steps on page 1470 for cooking pulses in the microwave).

If you are pressed for time, or do not want to prepare and cook pulses ahead, simply substitute drained canned pulses, using 2 × 425g / 15oz cans instead of 450g / 1lb dried pulses (uncooked weight). Rinse canned pulses before using.

Beef in a browning dish

A browning dish has many uses in the microwave, and it is particularly good for a quick roast beef joint with an authentic browned surface and delicious smell.

Make sure the meat is completely dry by patting it with absorbent paper. If you don't do this, it will 'steam' in its own juices instead of browning appetizingly.

When using a browning dish, always pre-heat it for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to the manufacturer's instructions. If your microwave has a probe, do not use it with a browning dish as this can be dangerous, and when using a meat thermometer, remove the meat from the browning dish for an accurate reading. Small joints with bones are difficult to test with a thermometer because of the high percentage of bone to meat. The chart opposite gives approximate cooking times and temperatures; use these as a guide to calculate cooking times.

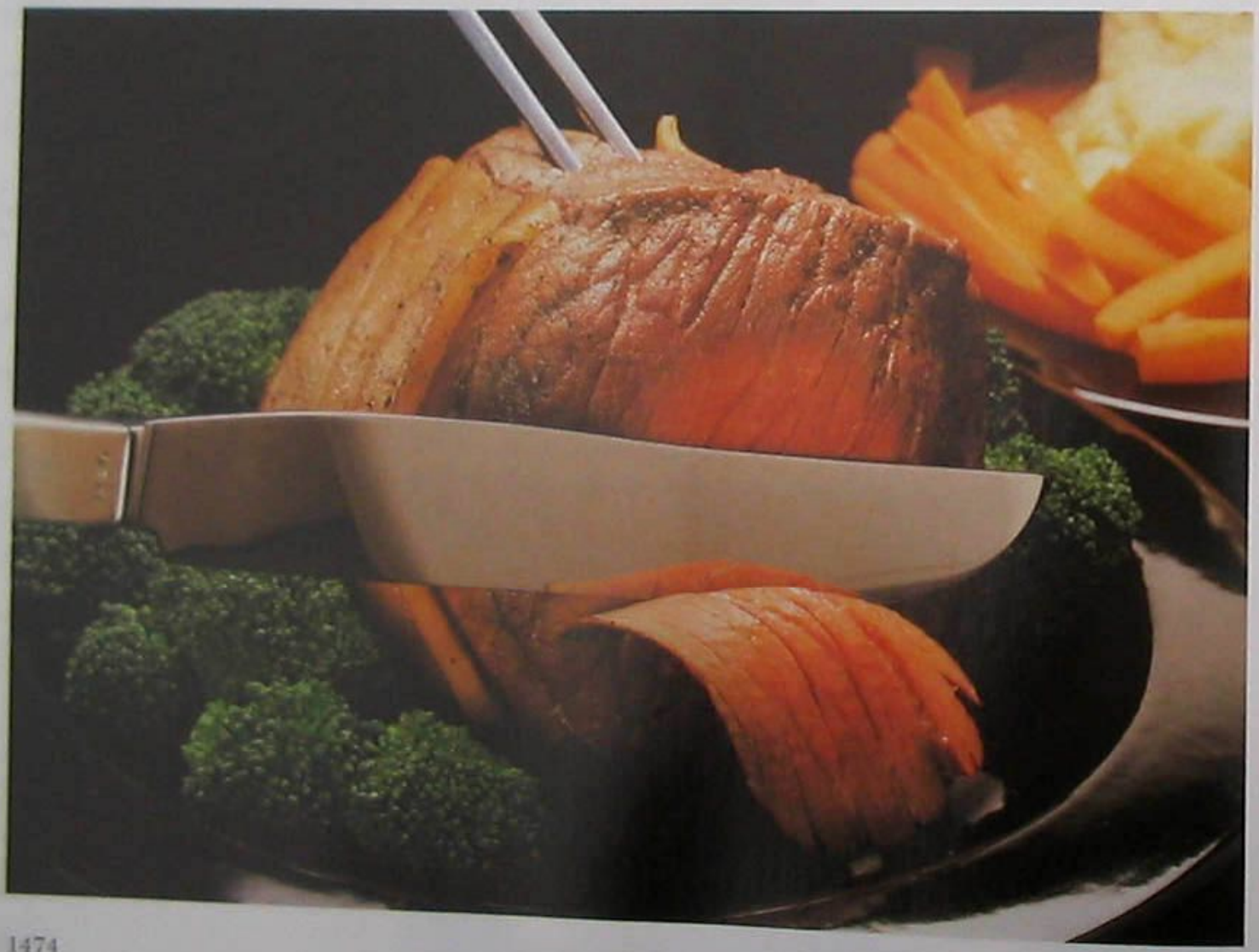
First, sear the meat in the pre-heated browning dish, then give it an initial 'burst' at 100% (High) for 5, 8, or 10 minutes, depending on whether you want the finished joint to be rare, medium or well done. Then transfer the meat from the browning dish on to a plate, cover it and let it stand for 5 minutes. This helps to tenderize it.

Drain off excess juice from the browning dish and keep this to use for gravy. Place the grid of a roasting rack or an upturned saucer in the dish, turn the meat over and place it, uncovered, on the rack. Continue cooking for the calculated time at 50% (Medium).

Test with a thermometer at end of minimum cooking time, and return the meat to the microwave for a further minute or two if necessary. When it is done, cover the joint with foil and stand it for 15 minutes. The joint continues to cook during standing and its temperature rises (see chart).

Serve roast beef with your favourite vegetables, horseradish, mustard and gravy or Béarnaise sauce, see Part 43, page 1182.

Pepper Beef



Pepper beef

19 mins

Standing time: 20 mins

Herbs and seasonings can be sprinkled over a joint before microwaving. However, salt draws out moisture from the meat and this will toughen it during cooking. Therefore, add salt after microwaving.

900g / 2lb topside, silverside or boned, rolled sirloin
black pepper
7.5ml / 1½tsp vegetable oil
15g / ½oz butter

SERVES 4

How to microwave Pepper beef

Weigh *joint and calculate cooking time according to doneness preferred (see chart, below). Pat meat dry with absorbent paper and sprinkle liberally with black pepper.*

Pre-heat *a browning dish for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil and butter, swirl round, then add the meat, searing it on all sides.*

Position *joint, meat side upwards and cover loosely with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5, 8 or 10 minutes for rare, medium or well done meat; half turn dish once.*

Stand *joint, covered, for 5 minutes. Drain juices from browning dish; reserve. Place grid of a microwave roasting rack or an upturned saucer in browning dish.*

Place *joint on rack with other side up. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for rest of calculated time. Turn dish once. Cover meat with foil and stand for 15 minutes.*

Microwave times for roasting beef in a browning dish

CUT	DONE-NESS	PER 450g/ 1lb	PROCEDURE					
			100% (HIGH)	FIRST STANDING	50% (MED)	REMOVE AT	STAND	CARVE AT
Rib on bone*	Rare	5-6 mins	5 mins	5 mins	rest of calculated time	44°C / 112°F	15 mins	
	Medium	9-11 mins	8 mins	5 mins		50°C / 122°F	15 mins	60°C / 140°F
	Well done	13-15 mins	10 mins	5 mins		62°C / 144°F	15 mins	70°C / 158°F
Boned, rolled rib	Rare	7-9 mins	5 mins	5 mins	rest of calculated time	40°C / 104°F	15 mins	58°C / 135°F
	Medium	9-12 mins	8 mins	5 mins		50°C / 122°F	15 mins	60°C / 140°F
	Well done	13-15 mins	10 mins	5 mins		64°C / 148°F	15 mins	70°C / 158°F
Topside, Silver-side or Sirloin, boned	Rare	7-8 mins	5 mins	5 mins	rest of calculated time	40°C / 104°F	15 mins	58°C / 135°F
	Medium	8-9 mins	8 mins	5 mins		52°C / 126°F	15 mins	65°C / 149°F
	Well done	9-11 mins	10 mins	5 mins		62°C / 144°F	15 mins	70°C / 158°F

* Do not use a thermometer to test joints of 450g / 1lb and under.

Peachy beef platter

28 mins

Standing time: 20 mins

1.1kg / 2½lb rib of beef
30ml / 2tbls French mustard
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
15g / ½oz butter
350g / 12oz Brussels sprouts, halved if large
225g / 8oz baby onions
150ml / ¼pt boiling beef stock, made with ¼ beef stock cube
425g / 15oz can peaches, drained with 30ml / 2tbls syrup reserved
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Cook the meat as in the steps on page 1475, spreading mustard evenly over lean sides of meat at step 1.
2 Wash browning dish and pre-heat for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Skim 15-30ml / 1-2tbls fat from the surface of the reserved meat juices. Add to the browning dish together with the Brussels sprouts and onions.

Peachy Beef Platter

3 Stir-fry briskly for about 1 minute or until sizzling stops. Add beef stock, cover with lid and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once, until sprouts are tender but still crisp. Add peaches and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds.
4 Transfer peaches and vegetables to a warmed serving dish. Add juices from vegetables to reserved meat and peach juices.
5 Blend cornflour and water. Add to the juices and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, stirring once, until bubbly. Serve with meat and vegetables.

Cook's notes

Use the meat juices for a tasty sauce or gravy. For wine sauce blend 50ml / 2fl oz red wine, 5ml / 1tsp French mustard and 5ml / 1tsp sugar with the meat juices. Mix 15ml / 3tsp cornflour with 125ml / 4fl oz water and stir into wine mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring once until thickened and hot.

Bay and garlic beef

24½ mins

Standing time: 20 mins

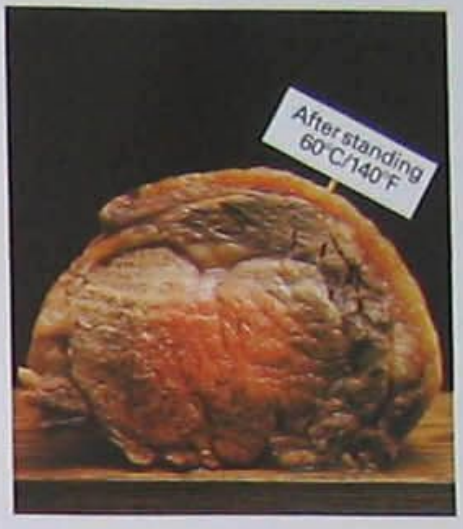
1.1kg / 2½lb boned rolled rib of beef
1 large garlic clove, thinly sliced
2 bay leaves, slivered
7.5ml / 1½tsp vegetable oil
15g / 1½oz butter

SERVES 4

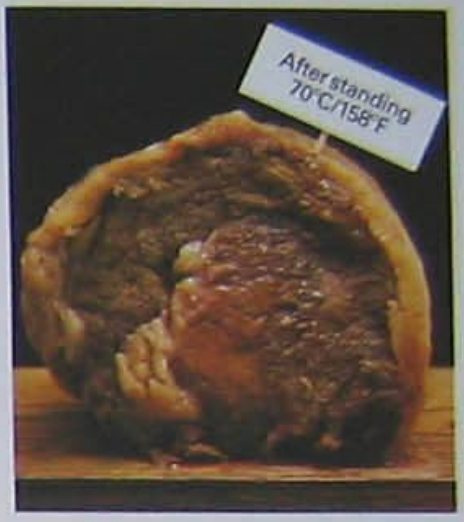
1 Weigh joint and calculate cooking time (see chart, page 1475). Pat the meat dry with absorbent paper, make 5 or 6 deep slits in the flesh on both sides of the meat and push a garlic and bay leaf sliver into each slit.
2 Pre-heat a browning dish for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add oil and butter, swirl round and add meat. Sear on all sides.
3 Turn the joint meat side upwards in the dish and cover loosely with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5, 8 or 10 minutes according to the degree of doneness preferred. Give the dish a half turn once during cooking.
4 Remove joint from the micro-

How to test boned, rolled beef roasted in a browning dish

Rare. *Remove joint from microwave when the internal temperature is 40°C / 104°F. Place on a warm plate and cover tightly with foil. Stand for 15 minutes and the internal temperature rises to 58°C / 135°F.*



Medium. *Remove joint from microwave when the internal temperature is 50°C / 122°F. Place on a warm plate and cover tightly with foil. Stand for 15 minutes and the internal temperature rises to 60°C / 140°F.*



Well-done. *Remove joint from microwave when the internal temperature is 64°C / 148°F. Place on a warm plate and cover tightly with foil. Stand for 15 minutes and the internal temperature rises to 70°C / 158°F.*

wave and stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Drain and reserve juices for sauce or gravy.

5 Put the grid of a microwave roasting rack in dish. Turn joint over and place it on the rack or saucer. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for the remainder of the calculated time, turning the dish once. Test the meat with a thermometer to see if it is done.

6 Stand meat on a warmed serving plate. Cover in foil with the shiny side in for 15 minutes. Serve with wine sauce (see page 1476) jacket potatoes and mange tout or green beans.

Microtips

When using a browning dish for roasting beef, always check with your microwave manufacturer's handbook. Never pre-heat the dish for longer than the recommended time as this can damage the glass turntable or glass plate cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the browning dish on an heatproof glass plate or trivet.

Bay and Garlic Beef

Party starters

Perfect for a plan-ahead party or for guests who 'drop-in' for drinks, these tantalizing appetizers take no time to microwave and freeze, ready to produce at the shake of a cocktail mixer!

Let the microwave help you entertain with ease. Whether your party is planned in advance or not, you can treat your guests to a range of tempting appetizers. Get the preparation out of the way and prepare these appetizers ahead, then store in the freezer, ready to microwave — at a moment's notice.

The microwave makes the initial cooking so easy — melting and softening cheeses is quick and clean and cooking extra flavourings takes just a moment. As an extra bonus, the recipes here mainly use storecupboard ingredients, such as anchovies, crabmeat and bottled sauces to provide plenty of flavour, so there is no need for a special shopping trip.

Freezing and thawing

The recipes here freeze well for between 1-4 months, depending on the ingredients. When freezing soft dips, spreads and pâtés in rigid containers, remember to leave 12mm / ½in headspace to allow for expansion. If the container is made of strong polythene it can go into the microwave for the first few minutes of thawing time, until the food is loosened. Tip the food into a microwave-safe serving dish and break up with a fork. Stir regularly during the second half of microwaving.

Serving party eats

For minimum fuss — and maximum fun — serve dips in a bowl surrounded by fresh vegetable 'dippers', potato chips, savoury biscuits and/or Cheese Straws. For more sophisticated presentation, serve in hollowed out tomato shells and pipe thick mixtures on to small crackers, savoury biscuits or sliced, crisp salad vegetables.

Above left: *Creamy Anchovy Dip*
Left: *Party Pâté*

Party pâté

6 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing time: 15 mins

This tasty pâté is a perfect topper for vegetable slices, but is equally good served on savoury crackers.

450g / 1lb chicken livers, rinsed and drained
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 small onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls white wine
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley
salt and pepper
1 hard-boiled egg, shelled and chopped
15ml / 1tbls brandy

SERVES 6

1 Prick the livers, then combine them with the garlic, onion, wine, parsley and seasoning in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the livers are no longer pink, stirring once. Drain.
2 Place the liver mixture, egg and brandy in a blender or food processor and purée until smooth.
3 To freeze, thaw and serve the pâté, see steps, right.

VARIATIONS

For a richer, creamier pâté, add 15ml / 1tbls double cream with the egg and brandy.

Microtips

The recipe time boxes refer to the microwaving time before freezing. Thawing or thawing and reheating time refers to the time for the whole recipe, except for the Cheesy Bacon Spread which is for just one Spread. Standing after thawing is only included where it occurs.

How to freeze, and thaw Party pâté

To freeze: *turn the pâté into a rigid, strong polythene container, leaving 12mm / ½in headspace. Cover, label and freeze no longer than 2 months.*

To thaw: *uncover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8 minutes. Turn out and break apart. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 7-10 minutes.*

To serve: *chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Spoon or pipe on to vegetable slices and garnish with parsley or chopped pimiento.*

Creamy anchovy dip

45 secs

Standing time: none

Thawing time: 10 mins

This piquant dip is ideal served with freshly prepared vegetables. Place the dip in a bowl on a large serving platter and surround with an assortment of vegetables.

100g / 4oz curd cheese
100g / 4oz cottage cheese, drained
4 canned anchovies, drained and chopped
100g / 4oz thick Greek yoghurt
¼ small onion, chopped
5ml / 1tsp horseradish sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the curd cheese in a small bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 45-60 seconds, stirring once. Stir in the remaining ingredients, blending well.
2 To freeze: spoon the dip into a strong polythene freezer container leaving 12mm / ½in headspace. Cover, label and freeze for up to 6 weeks.

TO SERVE
Uncover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-6 minutes. Stir, then turn into a microwave serving dish and continue microwaving for 5-6 minutes, stirring once. Sprinkle with paprika.

Freezer notes

Rinse leftover anchovies in cold water and drain on absorbent paper, then place in a small freezer bag and freeze up to 1 month.

To thaw, transfer anchovies to a bowl. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30-40 seconds with glass of water in the cooker.

Microtips

Creamy anchovy dip is also delicious served just slightly warmed, with potato crisps and pieces of wholemeal toast.

Once the dip is thawed, increase power to 50% (Medium) for 1½-2½ minutes. Do not overheat or the mixture may separate.

Peppered crab dip

30 secs

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 14 mins

225g / 8oz cream cheese
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
2.5ml / ½tsp snipped chives
2 × 170g / 6oz cans crabmeat, drained and cartilage removed
5ml / 1tsp dried onion flakes, soaked for 5 minutes
large pinch of cayenne pepper

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the cream cheese in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in remaining ingredients.
2 To freeze: spoon into a freezer container, cover, label and freeze for up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Uncover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6-7 minutes. Turn into a bowl and microwave a further 6-7 minutes; stir every 2 minutes. Increase power to 70% (Medium-High) for 2-3 minutes to heat. Use same day as thawed.

Spinach mouthfuls

4 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 6½ mins

These spinach mouthfuls look very decorative when served together with the Barbecue Meatballs. Combine in a dish, piercing with cocktail sticks, for an attractive display.

275g / 10oz packet frozen chopped spinach
75g / 3oz Gruyére cheese, grated
45ml / 3tbls dried breadcrumbs
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
15ml / 1tbls grated onion
salt
1 small egg, beaten

MAKES 18-20

1 Pierce the packet of spinach and place on a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until thawed; drain, pressing out all the excess liquid.
2 In a bowl, mix the remaining ingredients with the spinach. Use a teaspoon to help shape the mixture into 2.5cm / 1in balls, allowing 7.5ml / 1½tsp for each one.
3 To freeze: arrange the balls evenly on a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper; cover with another sheet of paper. Freeze overnight. Then, pack in a freezer container or freezer bag, seal, label and freeze for up to 2 weeks.

TO SERVE
Unpack the frozen spinach balls and arrange on a plate lined with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) and continue microwaving for 4½-6 minutes, or until hot and just set, rearranging twice.

Chilli cheese dip

4½ mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 11 mins

275ml / ½pt milk
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
25g / 1oz butter, cubed
50g / 2oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
100g / 4oz Red Leicester cheese*, grated
5ml / 1tsp Tabasco sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp Worcestershire sauce
15ml / 1tbls finely chopped green pepper
1 small garlic clove, crushed

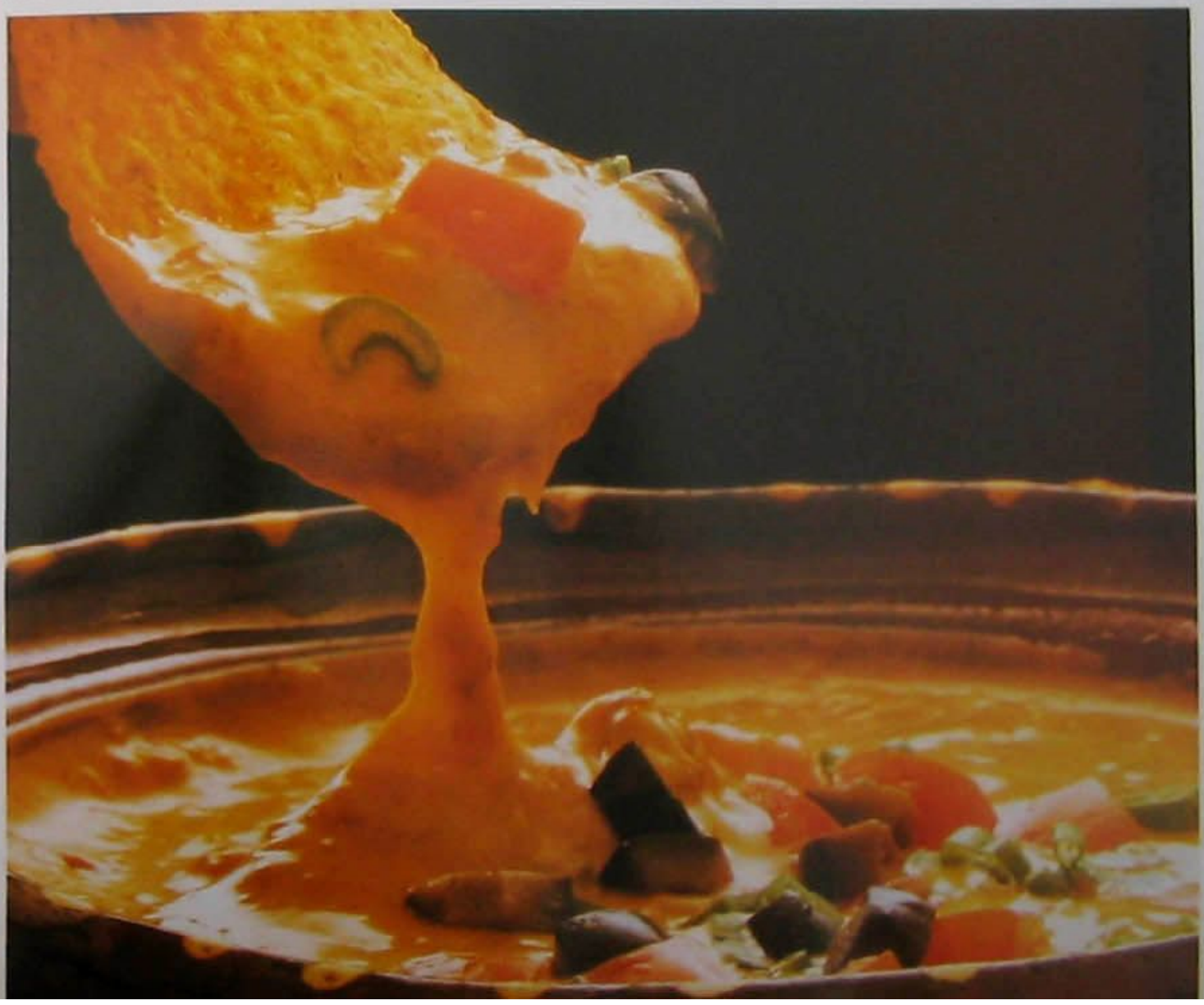
SERVES 6-8

1 Place the milk in a bowl and whisk in the flour and butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, whisking every 30 seconds, or until thickened.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients and continue microwaving at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until the cheeses are melted. Allow to cool completely.
3 To freeze: spoon into a rigid polythene freezer container, leaving 12mm / ½in head space. Cover, label and freeze for no longer than 3 months.

TO SERVE
Uncover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5 minutes. Turn into a serving bowl and continue microwaving for 5-7 minutes, stirring twice. To serve hot, increase power to 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Top with chopped vegetables such as spring onions, tomato, black olives and serve with corn or taco chips.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use Cheddar cheese

Chilli Cheese Dip



Crunchy cheese straws

10 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing time: 1½ mins

Standing after thawing: 2 mins

3 bacon rashers, rinds removed
225g / 8oz plain flour
50g / 2oz butter, diced
25g / 1oz cooking margarine, diced
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
large pinch of chilli powder
90-105ml / 6-7tbls cold water

MAKES 42-48

1 Place the bacon on a double layer of absorbent paper and cover with another piece. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until crisp. Cool, then crumble.
2 Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl, then rub in the butter and lard until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the bacon, Cheddar and Parmesan cheeses and chilli. Stir in the water, then gather the mixture together and knead lightly to a dough.
3 Roll out the dough and cut into straws, following steps, right.
4 Microwave one tray of straws at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until dry and puffy, rotating a quarter turn every minute; watch closely. Cool on wire rack. Repeat with remaining tray.
5 To freeze: transfer the cold straws to a freezer bag and seal, or pack in a rigid container, separating layers with freezer tissue; cover. Freeze up to 2 months.

TO SERVE

Arrange the straws on a large serving plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes; stand for 2 minutes. Serve cold.

Microtips

If using a cardboard tray, check that it does not contain any metal staples. Keep an eye on the cheese straws during microwaving as they can easily overcook and burn.

How to roll out Crunchy cheese straws

Divide *the dough in half and shape into smooth balls. Roll out each ball to 3mm / ⅛in thickness. Cut into 2.5cm × 7.5cm / 1 × 3in strips with a sharp knife or pastry cutter.*

Line *a microwave baking tray or 30cm / 12in square of cardboard with non-stick baking paper. Arrange half straws on tray. Microwave on inverted plate as directed; repeat.*

Barbecue meatballs

5 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 9 mins

450g / 1lb lean minced beef
60ml / 4tbls white breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
30ml / 2tbls grated onion
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls barbecue sauce
salt and pepper

TO SERVE
175ml / 6fl oz barbecue sauce
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley

SERVES 6-8

1 In a small bowl, mix together the minced beef, breadcrumbs, parsley, onion, lemon juice, sauce and seasoning to taste. Shape the mixture into meatballs using a teaspoon; this makes about 30 meatballs.
2 Arrange the meatballs on a roasting .rack and cover with greaseproof paper to contain spitting. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the meatballs are firm and no longer pink, rearranging once.
3 To freeze: skim off the fat and allow to cool. Pack in a rigid freezer container or freezer bag (see Freezer notes, below); label and freeze up to 2 months.

TO SERVE
Unpack the frozen meatballs and arrange on a roasting rack. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6-6½ minutes, or until softened, rearranging two or three times. Transfer to a bowl, pour over the barbecue sauce and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until heated, turning once. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve with wooden cocktail sticks.

Freezer notes

To keep the meatballs separate during freezing and ease their removal, open-freeze on lined trays for 3-4 hours until firm before packing and freezing as directed.

Cheesy bacon spread

8½ mins

Standing time: none

Thawing time: 1½ mins

Standing after thawing: 15 mins

This mixture makes two little spreads. Serve one with pre-dinner drinks or both as accompaniments for a drink's party.

12 bacon rashers, rinds removed
50g / 2oz butter
225g / 8oz cream cheese
50g / 2oz Parmesan cheese, grated, plus 30ml / 2tbls
45ml / 3tbls chopped spring onion
8-10 drops of Tabasco sauce
15ml / ¼tsp paprika

MAKES 2 × 6 SERVINGS

1 Place the bacon on a roasting rack or between a double layer of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-12 minutes, or until crisp. Drain and crumble.
2 Combine the butter and cream cheese in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-60 seconds, or until butter is softened. Mix in the crumbled bacon, 50g / 2oz Parmesan cheese, chopped spring onion and Tabasco sauce.
3 Line two small bowls with stretch wrap and grease lightly with the oil. Mix the remaining Parmesan cheese with the paprika and sprinkle evenly over the base and sides of the bowl to lightly coat. Divide the cheesy bacon mixture between the bowls, then press down into the shape of the bowls.
4 To freeze: open-freeze until firm. Remove from the bowls with the help of the stretch wrap; fold any excess wrap over the top. Over-wrap with foil, label and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Unwrap one packet and place on a plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-3 minutes, or until slightly thawed, taking care not to melt the edges; rotate a quarter turn twice. Stand 15 minutes.

Cheesy Bacon Spread

Fast fruity puddings

Quick desserts don't have to come out of packets. For sweets that are tasty and varied, fruit is the obvious choice. With the high speed help of the microwave, you can make luscious desserts in under 10 minutes.

Fruit is ideal for family desserts. Nutritious and naturally sweet, fruit desserts can range from warming winter puddings to light treats that aren't too filling — or fattening.

Fresh fruit cooks beautifully in the microwave. It keeps its fresh colour and texture as well as its natural, wholesome flavour. Dried fruit can be plump and tender in minutes without pre-soaking or hours of simmering. Canned fruit heats through in seconds without going unpleasantly flabby.

Try the recipes here and take advantage of fruits at their seasonal best. Or use the dried and canned fruit in new and different ways — like Jammy Peaches, or Quick Compote.

Raspberry baked apples

12 min

Standing time: 3 mins

4 eating apples
175g / 6oz raspberries
15ml / 1tbls honey
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
45ml / 3tbls unsweetened apple juice
60ml / 4tbls thick Greek yoghurt or single cream to serve

SERVES 4

1 Using a small, sharp knife, cut the apples in half in a zig-zag pattern by making small 'v' cuts around the middle through to the core. Twist, if necessary, to separate the halves. Remove the stalks.
2 Scoop out cores with a teaspoon, then divide the raspberries between the cavities. Arrange apples around the edge of a large dish.
3 Mix honey and cinnamon, then blend in apple juice. Spoon over the apples. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 12-13 minutes, or until apples are tender. Give each apple a quarter turn and baste with the cooking juices every 3 minutes and give dish a quarter turn three times during cooking.

Raspberry Baked Apples

4 Let stand for 3 minutes. Serve hot, with the juices spooned over, allowing two halves per person. To serve, top with thick natural Greek yoghurt or single cream, if liked.

Slimmer's notes

Raspberry baked apples are an ideal dessert for slimmers. By using dessert apples you need not add any additional sweetner, but even with honey each portion provides only 100Cal / 420kJ.

Strawberry mountain

3 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

100g / 4oz wholemeal flour
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
50g / 2oz soft margarine
30ml / 2tbls light brown sugar
75g / 3oz ground almonds
1 large egg, beaten
1-2 drops almond flavouring
275g / 10oz strawberries, hulled
30-45ml / 2-3tbls double cream, whipped
15ml / 1tbls honey

SERVES 4

1 Sift flour and baking powder; add any bran left in sieve. Add margarine, sugar, almonds, flavouring and egg; mix well.
2 Turn dough on to a lightly floured surface and knead briefly. Press out into two 15cm / 6in rounds; neaten edges.
3 Place one round on a plate lined with greaseproof paper and score into four wedges. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the surface is dry and the edges are firm, turning dish a half turn halfway through cooking time. While still hot, cut into wedges. Stand for 2 minutes; cool.
4 Repeat with second round but do not score or cut into wedges.
5 Reserve one whole strawberry. Roughly mash or chop the rest. Stir in cream and honey and mix.
6 Mound the mixture over the whole round. Arrange the wedges and strawberry on top.

Buttery baked pears

3 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

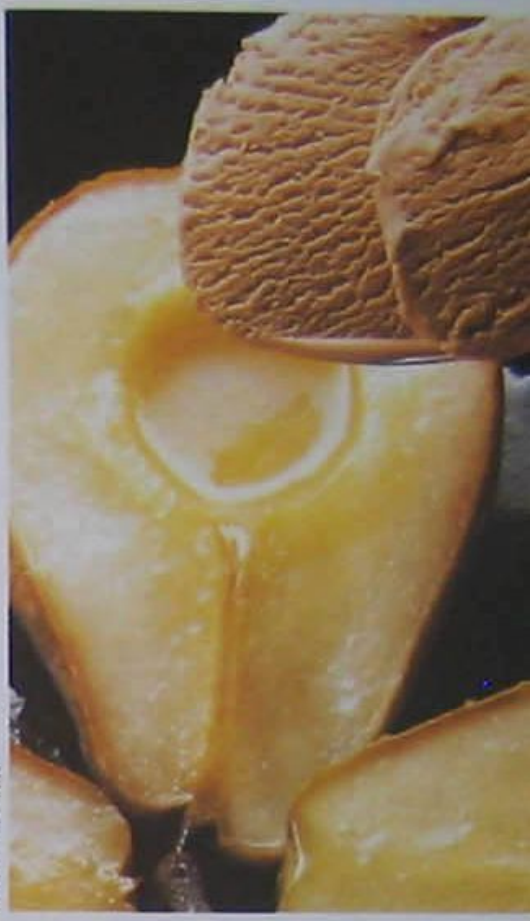
The microwave makes amazingly quick work of cooking pears. Serve them with chocolate or vanilla ice cream, for an 'instant' hot dessert.

2 dessert pears, halved and cored
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
25g / 1oz butter

SERVES 4

1 Arrange the pears cut-side up in a dish, with the narrow stalk ends to the centre of the dish. Sprinkle the cavity of each pear half with sugar and dot with butter.
2 Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, giving the dish a half turn halfway through cooking time.
3 Stand, covered, for 2 minutes.

Left: *Buttery Baked Pears*
Below: *Strawberry Mountain*



PAUL WEBSTER

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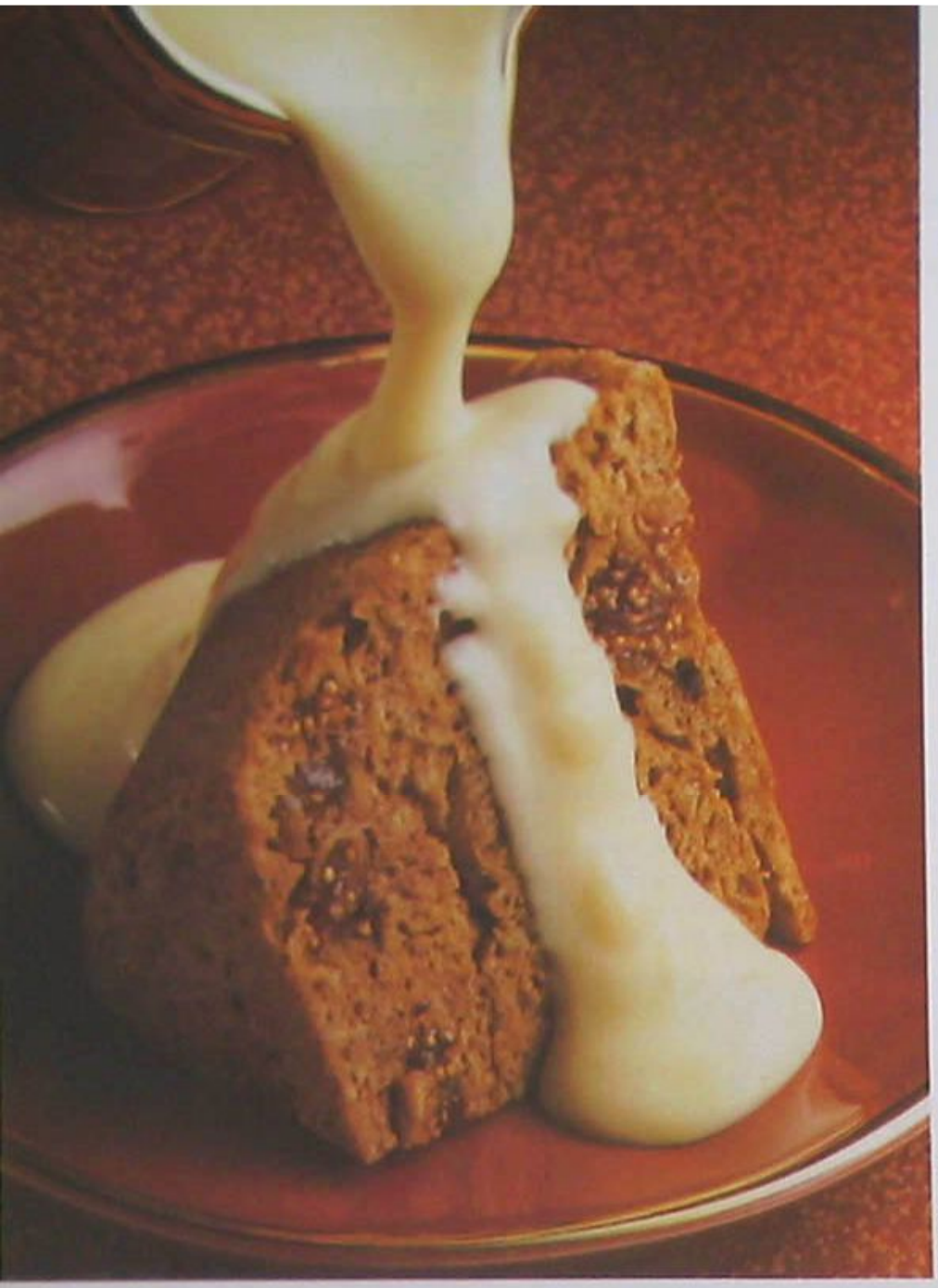


Fast Figgy Pudding

PAUL WEBSTER

Fast figgy pudding

4½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

75ml / 5tbls brown breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz self-raising flour, sifted
5ml / 1tsp ground mixed spice
50g / 2oz soft dark brown sugar
175g / 6oz dried figs, chopped
grated zest of 1 lemon
2 eggs, beaten
30-45ml / 2-3tbls milk
custard to serve

SERVES 4-5

1 Mix breadcrumbs, flour, spice, sugar, figs and lemon zest in a bowl. Make a well in the centre and stir in the eggs and milk to give a soft dropping consistency.
2 Spoon into a greased 800ml / 1½pt pudding basin. Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, or until just firm.
3 Stand for 5 minutes; turn out.

Microtips

To make custard in the microwave, put 30ml / 6tsp custard powder and 15-30ml / 3-6tsp sugar in a 1.1L / 2pt jug. Blend in 575ml / 1pt cold milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until thickened, stirring twice.

Quick compote

5 mins

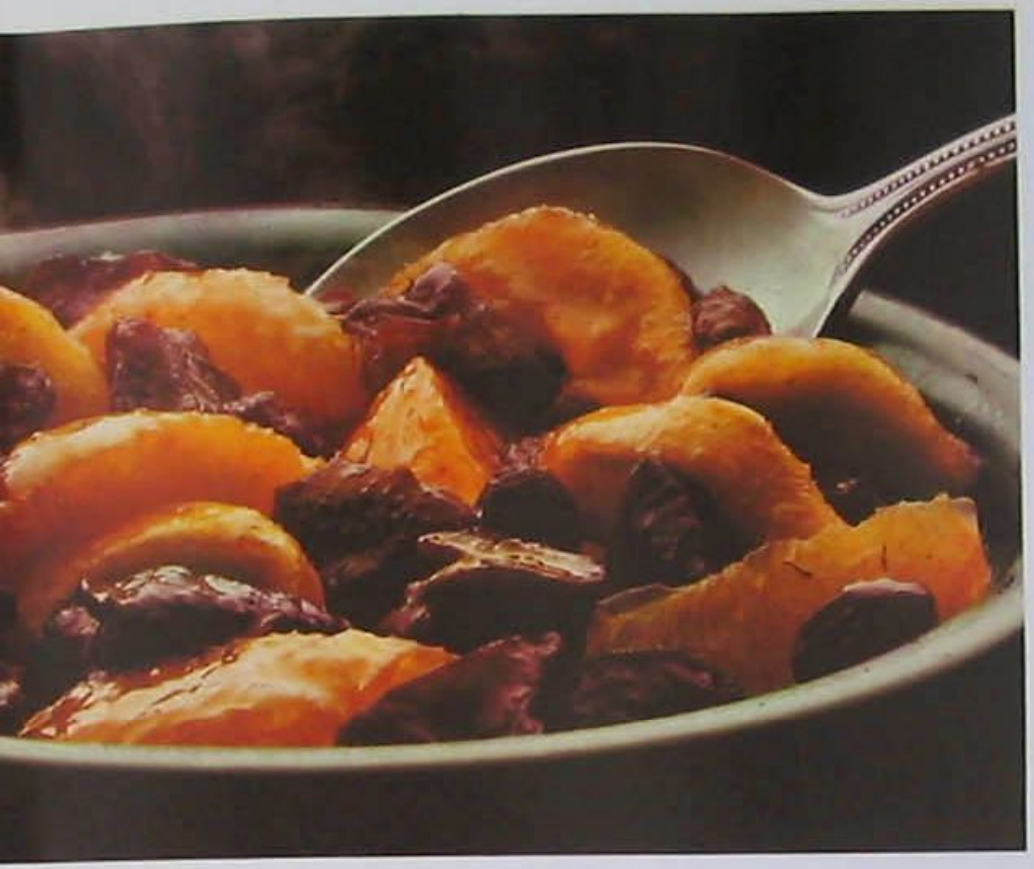
Standing time: 5 mins

Ring the changes with this dessert of syrupy dried fruits. The curry powder adds spiciness.

100g / 4oz stoned prunes, chopped
50g / 2oz dried apple slices
50g / 2oz raisins
125ml / 4fl oz water
125ml / 4fl oz apple juice
15ml / 1tbls honey
large pinch of curry powder
2 small oranges

SERVES 4

1 Combine prunes, apples, raisins, water, apple juice, honey and curry powder in a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole. Mix well.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the fruit is tender; stir twice.
3 Thickly peel the oranges, removing every scrap of white pith. Cut between the membrane to free the segments and place them in a small bowl. Squeeze any extra juice from the membrane



Jammy peaches

2 mins

Standing time: none

8 drained canned peach halves
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
45ml / 3tbls strawberry jam

SERVES 4

1 Place peaches, flat side up, on a large plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until heated through. Reserve.
2 Place the jam in a small bowl and microwave at 70% (Medium High) for 30-45 seconds, or until melted. Cool slightly.
3 Spoon the cream into the peach cavities, drizzle the jam on top and serve.

VARIATION
Use pear halves instead of peaches and try different jams, such as cherry, raspberry or apricot.

over orange segments.
4 Stir the orange segments and their juices into the hot compote. Cover and stand for 5 minutes. Serve hot or chilled in small dishes, with natural yoghurt if liked.

Quick compote for two: halve ingredients. Combine dried fruits, liquids, honey and curry powder in an 850ml / 1½pt bowl. Add extra water, if necessary, so fruit is just covered. Cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, stirring three times. Add orange segments; stand 5 minutes.

Butterscotch bananas

2½ mins

Standing time: none

6 small, firm bananas
65g / 2½oz butter
100g / 4oz demerara sugar
45ml / 3tbls single cream
45ml / 3tbls toasted hazelnuts, chopped (see Part 31, page 839)

SERVES 4

1 Place butter and sugar in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes or until sugar dissolves, stirring once.
2 Peel bananas and cut in half crossways. Toss in butter mixture to coat. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to heat.
3 Stir cream and nuts into the butter sauce and pour over the bananas to serve.

Above: *Quick Compote*
Below: *Jammy Peaches*

Cook's notes

Because jam contains a large amount of sugar it attracts microwaves and gets hot very quickly. Watch it carefully to make sure it does not boil and burn. Allow it to cool slightly before drizzling it over the peaches as it is too hot to eat right away.

Summer supper for 4

Food doesn't have to be formal to look — and taste — really good. Treat your friends to this simply delicious, light spread — from starter to dessert, it's quick and easy to prepare and microwave.

Entertaining friends is such a pleasure — for guests and hosts alike — if you let the microwave do the work for you. These dishes are eye-catching, tasty and so simple to prepare and serve.

For an informal meal, finger-type foods are just the thing — no-one can munch on juicy, buttered corn cobs and not enter into the relaxed spirit of the occasion. Ginger-flavoured chicken skewers cook perfectly by microwave and look marvellous arranged on a bed of nutty rice. Serve with a refreshing green salad.

The dessert is a thoroughly indulgent, sweet flan. Use your microwave to soften shop-bought ice cream, just enough to combine it with the other filling ingredients, then refreeze it in a crisp crust.

Countdown

The day before
Prepare and microwave the biscuit crust. Soften the ice cream, mix the filling and freeze in the biscuit crust.

Early on the day
Marinate the chicken pieces and leave in a sealed container in the refrigerator. Prepare the greens for the salad and refrigerate in the crisper compartment. Microwave the rice and set aside, covered, in a cool place.

In the afternoon
Prepare the butter mixture for the corn and set aside. Assemble the salad and return to the refrigerator. Thread the kebabs on to skewers and refrigerate until 30 minutes before they are to be cooked. Set table and chill wine.

Thirty minutes before serving
Transfer the dessert to the refrigerator to soften. Microwave the corn, then set aside in the bags, to stand for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, microwave the kebabs. Cover with foil, while you serve the first course. Heat the sauce for the corn at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Microwave the rice, covered, at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes. Serve with the kebabs and salad.

Corn with herb butter

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 corn cobs, husks removed

HERB BUTTER
75g / 3oz butter
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
generous pinch of mustard powder
generous pinch of Italian seasoning

SERVES 4

1 Trim any silky strands from the corn cobs. Place two cobs in each of two roasting bags.
2 Place all the butter ingredients in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1¼ minutes.
3 Spoon 45ml / 3tbls of the melted butter into each bag. Tie the ends securely and make a vent in the bags. Place on a dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-12 minutes, rearranging them after half the time.
4 When the kernels are just tender, remove from the cooker and leave to stand in the bags for 5 minutes. Serve with the rest of the melted butter as a sauce.

VARIATION
Spicy butter: to 75g / 3oz butter, add 2 thinly sliced spring onions, 1.5ml / ¼tsp chilli powder, a pinch of garlic salt and a few drops of Tabasco. Microwave as before.

Microtips

Cooking corn in roasting bags is handy and very easy for basting — just turn the bags over to recoat the corn in butter.

When sealing the bags, remember not to use the wire tags provided and to substitute cotton or string. Pierce the bags once near the tied end before microwaving.

MENU
Corn with Herb Butter
Whole cobs cooked with flavoured butter
Citrus Chicken Kebabs
Colourful skewers with marinated meat
Pine Nut Rice
A tasty pilaff textured with pine kernels
Crisp Green Salad
A fresh mixture of salad leaves
Rocky Road Ice Cream Flan
Chocolate chip ice cream in a biscuit case
SERVES 4

Citrus chicken kebabs

9 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb boneless chicken breasts
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
pinch of salt
150ml / ¼pt white wine
45ml / 3tbls honey
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
pinch of cayenne pepper
8 thin slices of orange
8 thin slices of lime or lemon

SERVES 4

1 Remove the skin from the chicken and cut the flesh into 2.5cm / 1in cubes.
2 Combine the oil, salt, wine, honey, soy sauce, ginger and cayenne pepper in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until hot. Mix in the chicken. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours.
3 Drain off and reserve the marinade. Thread the chicken on to four bamboo skewers, alternating the pieces with slices of orange and lime or lemon.
4 Place the kebabs on a roasting rack and baste with the reserved marinade. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8-12 minutes, or until the chicken is no longer pink, turning the kebabs over after 4 minutes and basting with more of the marinade.
5 Remove from the cooker, cover with foil and stand for 3 minutes before serving.

Pine nut rice

23½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz butter
225g / 8oz long-grain rice
1 small onion, chopped
500ml / 18fl oz chicken stock, made with 1 cube
5ml / 1tsp ground allspice
pinch of salt
1 bay leaf
45ml / 3tbls pine nuts
45ml / 3tbls currants
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until melted.
2 Stir in the rice and onion. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once, until the onion is just translucent.
3 Pour the stock into a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until just boiling. Pour on the rice. Stir in the allspice, salt and bay leaf.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 12-15 minutes, or until the rice is tender.
5 Stir in the pine nuts, currants and parsley. Stand, covered for 5 minutes before serving.

Citrus Chicken Kebabs

PAUL WEBSTER

Rocky road ice cream flan

2¾ mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz butter
225g / 8oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
45ml / 3tbls sugar

FILLING
1L / 1¾pt chocolate ice cream
75g / 3oz chocolate chips
128g / 4½oz packet marshmallows, quartered

SERVES 6-8

Microtips

Soften the ice cream flan in the microwave before serving. Uncover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-45 seconds until softened. Watch carefully that the ice cream does not melt.

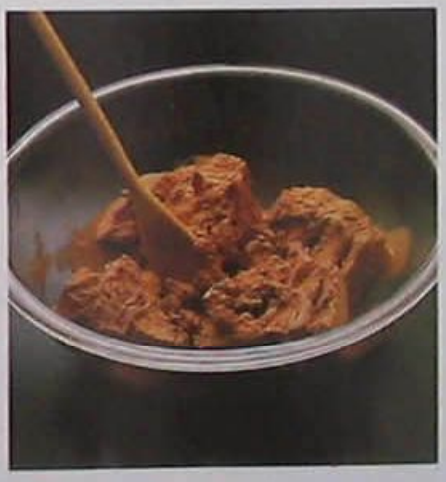
Freezer notes

If you like, assemble the ice cream flan well in advance and freeze for up to 3 months.

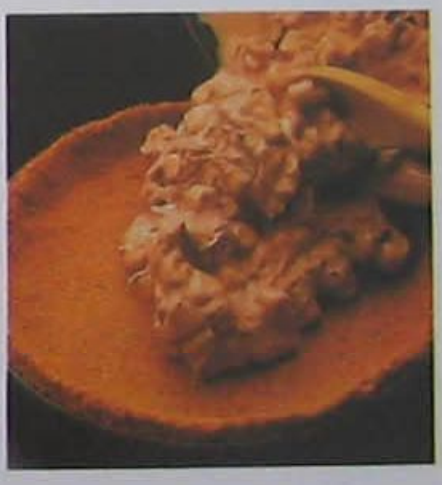
Do not use the soft scoop variety of ice cream for this flan, as it will not have the same texture when refrozen, and will melt too fast on removal from the freezer.

How to microwave Rocky road ice cream flan

Place *the butter in a 23cm / 9in flan dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the crumbs and sugar, then press the mixture firmly over the base and sides of the dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1¼-1½ minutes, turning once. Cool.*



Place *the ice cream in a large bowl which allows plenty of room for stirring and break it up roughly into quarters. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 45-60 seconds, watching all the time to see that it does not melt. The ice cream should be just soft, so it can be stirred; but not too liquid.*



Mix *the chocolate chips and marshmallows into the ice cream using an electric whisk at the lowest speed or by hand using a wooden spoon. Spoon mixture into the cooled crumb case and spread evenly. Cover and freeze for 2 hours or overnight until firm. Store frozen for up to 3 months.*

Adapting a recipe: drinks

From a welcoming glass of hot punch, to a warming bedtime nightcap, making drinks in the microwave is quick, simple and successful — just right for all ages and tastes.

A whole variety of beverages can be made quickly and easily in the microwave — family favourites like cocoa and lemonade, or unusual hot savoury drinks that will cheer up the coldest day.

Making beverages conventionally can be time-consuming and messy: a milky pan is never a pleasure to clean — especially if a moment's loss of concentration means the milk was burnt. In the microwave, drinks can be made in individual heatproof glasses or serving jugs; avoiding any mess. However, do make sure you leave plenty of room for the liquid to boil — and keep an eye on milky drinks as they can still boil over in the cooker. Also check glasses and jugs carefully for metal trims or rivets that will make them unsuitable for use in the microwave. Remember not to use lead crystal glass or antique glass which can shatter.

Use fresh vegetables to give flavour and goodness to unusual savoury drinks; and if there is any left; store them in the refrigerator then serve chilled or reheat individual servings.

Cocoa cups

CONVENTIONAL RECIPE

1L/1¾pt milk
30-40ml/6-8tsp cocoa
30-40ml/6-8tsp sugar
8 marshmallows, optional
SERVES 4

Large jug

1 Place the milk in a saucepan and place over a medium heat.

O mit

2 When the milk is warm, sprinkle the cocoa and sugar over. Bring to the boil, stirring constantly, then boil for 1 minute.

Whisk once

Microwave at 100% (High) until very hot

3 Whisk vigorously, then pour the cocoa into individual cups or mugs. Add the marshmallows, if wished, dunk beneath the surface and serve.

O mit

Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds then serve.

Cocoa cups

7¼ mins

Standing time: none

1L / 1¾pt milk
30-40ml / 6-8tsp cocoa
30-40ml / 6-8tsp sugar
8 marshmallows, optional

SERVES 4

1 Mix the milk, cocoa and sugar to taste in a large jug, then microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Whisk briskly to dissolve the cocoa, and microwave for a further 1½-2½ minutes, until very hot. Whisk until frothy, then pour into four mugs.
3 If liked, top each mug with two marshmallows, dunking them beneath the surface; microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds or until the marshmallows soften and puff up. Serve immediately while the drink is piping hot.

Cocoa cup for one: mix 225ml / 8fl oz milk and 7.5-10ml / 1½-2tsp each cocoa and sugar in a heatproof mug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, whisking briskly with a fork after 1 minute. Top with two marshmallows, dunk beneath the surface and microwave for 15-30 seconds.

Spiced Indian tea

3 mins

Standing time: none

850ml / 1½pt hot water
1 cinnamon stick, broken in half
1-2 cloves (optional)
5ml / 1tsp fennel seeds
8 cardamom pods, crushed
12mm / ½in square piece fresh root ginger, peeled, bruised
10ml / 2tsp Darjeeling tea
lemon slices and cinnamon sticks, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place the water, and the spices in a 1.1L / 2pt heatproof jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until boiling vigorously.
2 Stir in the tea and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30 seconds. Strain the tea, if wished, into glasses or cups and garnish each cup with a cinnamon stick and a slice of lemon stuck with cloves, if wished. Hand sugar separately.

Microtips

When microwaving milky drinks do not leave unattended or allow them to boil or form a skin. If you do, they are likely to boil over and leave you with a very sticky mess to clean up in the microwave.

Cook's notes

Some hot beverages, particularly milky ones can spill over the edge of the cup when stirred after microwaving. This is because the temperature of the drink becomes much hotter than the surface temperature during microwaving. Avoid this by stirring halfway through to even out the temperature and avoid hot spots. Rember to remove the spoon!

Left: *Cocoa Cups*
Right: *Spiced Indian Tea*

Left to right: *Tomato Cocktail, with spring onion curl garnish, Mulled Cider Punch, Hot Lemon and Honey and Spicy Savoury Cup*

Tomato cocktail

2 mins

Standing time: none

150ml / ¼pt water
275ml / ½pt tomato juice
2.5ml / ½tsp yeast extract
dash of cayenne pepper
½ garlic clove, thinly sliced
spring onion curls, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Pour the water and tomato juice into a 1.1L / 2pt heatproof jug. Stir in the yeast extract, cayenne pepper and garlic.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until hot, stirring two or three times. Strain into heatproof glasses, garnish and serve.

Mulled cider punch

4½ mins

Standing time: none

3 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick
37.5ml / 2½tbls raisins
1.1L / 2pt medium dry cider
275ml / ½pt unsweetened apple juice
cinnamon sticks, to garnish

SERVES 6

1 Place cloves, cinnamon stick, raisins, cider and apple juice in a large casserole.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, or until very hot. Strain into a jug and serve at once in punch glasses or earthenware mugs.

VARIATION
To really 'spark up' this drink, add 50ml / 1fl oz Calvados, an apple brandy for a warming punch.

Cook's notes

Spring onion curls make very attractive garnishes for all types of savoury drinks. Trim the top from the stalk and remove the papery outer skin. Make lengthways cuts, about 2.5cm / 1in deep, in the green stalk in the shape of a star.

Place in a dish of iced water, cover and refrigerate for 1-2 hours, or until the green stalks curl attractively. Dry gently on absorbent paper before using.

Microtips

Individual glasses of punch can easily be reheated in the microwave for late arrivals; microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds or until very hot — but do not let the drink boil, or the alcohol will evaporate.

Hot lemon and honey

3 mins

Standing time: none

225ml / 8fl oz water
juice of 1 lemon
30ml / 2tbls honey
2 cinnamon sticks
small knob of butter, optional

SERVES 2

1 Combine the water, lemon juice, honey and cinnamon sticks in a 575ml / 1pt jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until boiling, stirring once.
2 Pour into two heatproof tumblers, and top each with a small knob of butter, for extra richness, if liked.

VARIATION
Jamaican hot toddy: for a delicious warm drink with a real 'kick', add 30ml / 2tbls rum after microwaving.

Hot lemon and honey for one: halve all the ingredients and microwave the water, lemon, honey and cinnamon stick at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, until boiling, stirring once. Add a little butter if wished.

Spicy savoury cup

1 min

Standing time: none

225ml / 8fl oz tomato and vegetable juice
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
2-3 drops hot pepper sauce
pickled cucumber or gherkin wedges, to garnish

SERVES 2

1 Place the tomato and vegetable juice, Worcestershire sauce and hot pepper sauce in a 575ml / 1pt heatproof jug. Stir well, until the ingredients are well blended.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until hot but not boiling, stirring once. Pour into two heatproof glasses, garnish and serve.

VARIATION
For a drink with slightly less 'bite', add the hot pepper sauce after microwaving and taste after each drop.

Microtips

To make one cup of instant coffee, place a rounded teaspoon of coffee granules in a mug with 150ml / ¼pt cold water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until very hot. Stir, and add milk and sugar, if liked.

For 'teabag' tea, microwave 150ml / ¼pt cold water in a mug or cup at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, until very hot. Add the teabag and leave to infuse. Add milk and sugar if liked.

Fresh vegi cocktail

21 mins

Standing time: none

700ml / 1¼pt water
100g / 4oz shredded cabbage
2 large carrots, thinly sliced
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
275ml / ½pt tomato juice
10ml / 2tsp seasoning salt
celery leaves, to garnish
Worcestershire sauce, to serve

SERVES 6

1 Combine the water, cabbage, carrots, celery, and onion in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 18-20 minutes, or until the vegetables are soft, stirring two or three times during microwaving.
2 Strain the liquid into a large jug, discarding the vegetables. Add the tomato juice and seasoning salt and microwave for 3-4 minutes or until heated through.
3 Pour into six individual tumblers and garnish with celery tops. Serve with a dash of Worcestershire sauce, if wished. Cool then chill before serving, if wished.

Cook's notes

Make the most of your food processor for recipes such as Fresh Vegi Drink. It doesn't matter how thinly the vegetables are sliced — in fact the more finely they are chopped, the quicker they cook and infuse the stock with their flavour. So use the slicing attachment to save on time and energy. If liked, garnish the drink with a few thin carrot or celery slices.

Fresh Vegi Cocktail

Yeast cakes and buns

Once you have mastered a basic rich bread dough, you can turn it into a variety of inviting sweet cakes and buns — they are easy to make and irresistible too.

Give the family some satisfying tea-time treats. The bakes here make a change from the usual sponge cake mixtures. All the recipes here are made from one Basic Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981). This is simple to make and gives deliciously moist results.

The speed and efficiency of the microwave brings these otherwise time-consuming cakes within the scope of the busy cook. Use the microwave to rise your basic dough, then you have a versatile base for some really fragrant, spicy and delicious cakes.

Ring dishes are particularly suitable for baking, as microwave energy is distributed more evenly when it can penetrate from the centre as well as the sides.

Yeast doughs can dry considerably during microwaving, so take care not to overcook. Test them at the end of the earliest recommended microwaving time. The cake is done when the top is springy to the touch.

Coatings of butter, spices, sugar and crumbs give a rich flavour and a good colour to these cakes, and some are further enhanced with a glacé icing which gives extra sweetness too.

Cakes made with yeast are all at their best on the day of baking. If there should be any left over, wrap it closely in stretch wrap or foil and store in the refrigerator overnight.

Devonshire Splits

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Devonshire splits

3½ mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981)
Sifted icing sugar, for sprinkling

FILLING
200ml / 7fl oz double or clotted cream
75ml / 5tbls strawberry jam

MAKES 10

1 Divide the dough into 10 equal pieces and shape each one into a ball. Arrange in a ring on two greased baking dishes, spaced well apart. Cover and leave in a warm place for 10-15 minutes, until soft and puffy.
2 Uncover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes until springy to the touch. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.
3 Make a diagonal cut 2.5cm / 1in deep in each bun. Sprinkle with icing sugar. Whip the double cream, or stir the clotted cream; spoon whipped cream into a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle.
4 Spread the jam in the split, then pipe a strip of whipped cream along the top, or spread clotted cream carefully on the jam.

Apple ring cake

7¾ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

1 quantity Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981), risen
60ml / 4tbls granulated sugar
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar
2 digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
10ml / 2tsp ground cinnamon
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
2 dessert apples, peeled and cored, each sliced into twelve wedges

SERVES 8-10

1 Divide the dough into 24 even pieces, using a sharp knife or by snipping with kitchen scissors.
2 Mix the sugars, crumbs and cinnamon together in a bowl.
3 Place the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds.
4 Lightly grease a 2.0L / 3½pt microwave ring dish. Coat each piece of dough with butter, then with the sugar mixture.
5 Layer the pieces in the prepared dish, arranging an apple slice between the pieces, see note below. Cover and leave to rise for 1-2 hours in a warm place until doubled in volume. The dough is ready when it just springs back into shape, when it is pressed lightly with a floured finger.
6 Stand the dish on an inverted plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-3 minutes, or until just springy to touch, giving a quarter turn every 2 minutes.
7 Stand in dish 2 minutes, then turn out and cool on wire rack before serving.

Apple Ring Cake

Cook's notes

Arrange alternate pieces of dough and apple around the base of the prepared ring mould. Build the layers up to use all the dough and the fruit. Leave in a warm place to prove until it is twice its size.

Cinnamon daisy cake

7¾ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

1 quantity Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981), risen
45ml / 3tbls soft brown sugar
75g / 3oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
10ml / 2tsp ground cinnamon
50g / 2oz butter

GLACÉ ICING
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted
water to mix

SERVES 8-10

VARIATION
Serve rolls separately. Arrange around a 25cm / 10in plate. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-8 minutes. Serve the rolls warm with butter (see picture, right).

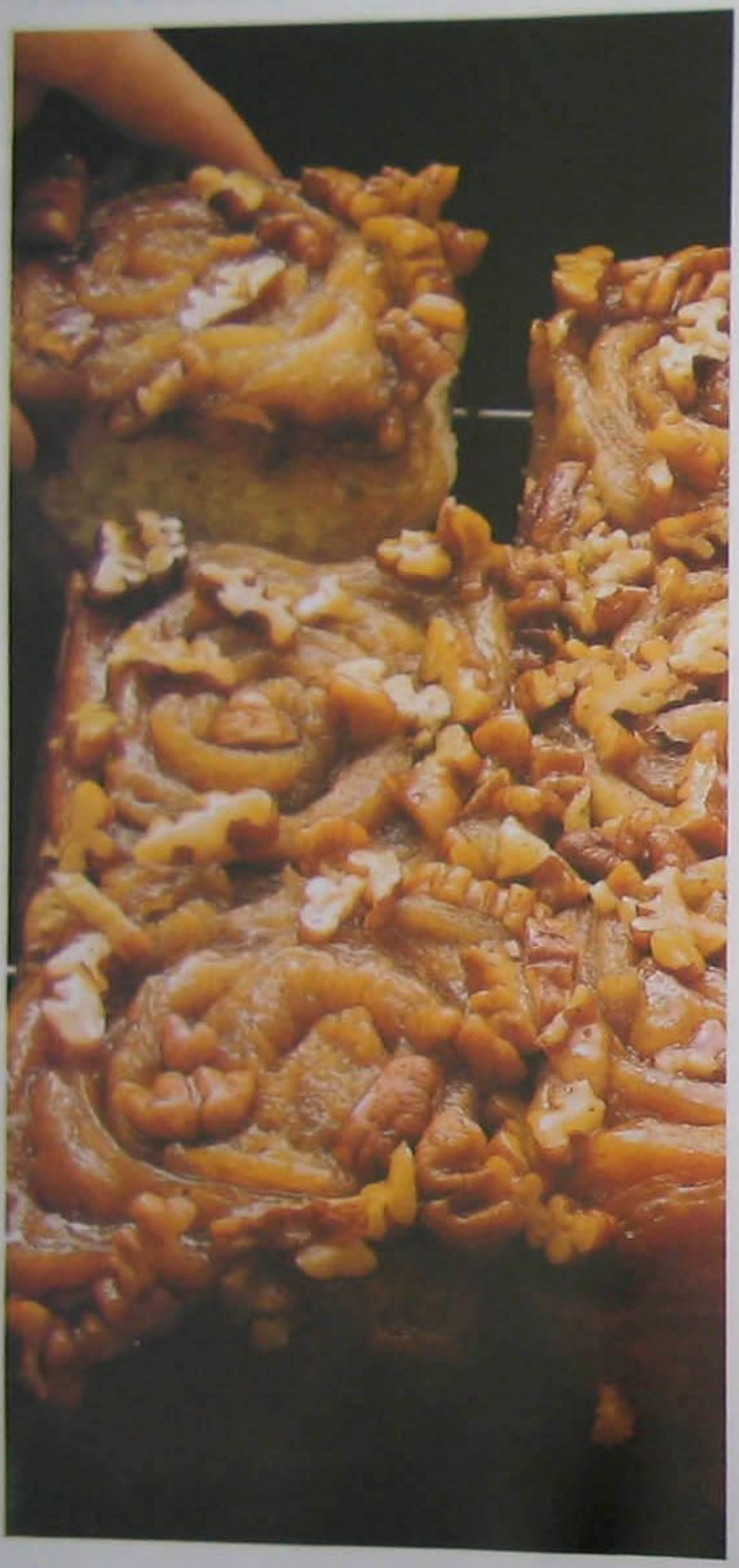
How to microwave Cinnamon daisy cake

Prepare *dough see Part 36, page 981, up to stage 4. Divide in half. Roll each piece to a 25cm / 10in square. Combine sugar, quarter of biscuit crumbs and cinnamon. Microwave butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Brush on to dough; sprinkle with crumb mixture. Repeat with second piece. Roll up and cut into 10 slices. Roll in remaining butter and coat in rest of the crumbs.*

Lightly *grease a 2.0l. / 3½pt fluted microwave ring dish. Layer rolls in dish, cut side down. Arrange evenly so that cake will be level when it is cooked.*

Cover *the cake and rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours, or until just doubled in size. Do not use the microwave to rise, as the butter and sugar will attract microwave energy, causing the dough to start cooking.*

Stand *the dish on an inverted plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-3 minutes, or until the top is just springy to the touch. Stand for 2 minutes, before cooling on a wire rack. Mix the icing sugar with water to make a thick, flowing icing. Spoon the icing over the ring in a drizzled pattern. Serve the same day.*



Sticky nut buns

11½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

1 quantity Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981), risen
100g / 4oz pecans or walnuts
50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz soft light brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls golden syrup

MAKES 9

1 Lightly knead the dough on a floured surface, then roll out to a 30cm / 12in a square.
2 Finely chop half the nuts; coarsely chop the rest. Reserve the finely chopped and coarsely chopped nuts in separate bowls.
3 Place the butter in a 0.5L / 1pt bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, to melt. Stir in the soft brown sugar and syrup. Brush half mixture over dough and sprinkle with finely chopped nuts.
4 Pour remaining syrup into a 23cm / 9in square dish and sprinkle with the coarsely chopped nuts.
5 Cut the dough into nine even strips and roll each one up. Place the rolls, cut side up, in the dish on top of the syrup and nuts.
6 Cover loosely and leave in a warm place to rise for 1-2 hours or until doubled in size.
7 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 9 minutes, giving the dish three quarter turns.
8 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 2-6 minutes, or until the top is just springy to the touch, giving a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes, then turn out on to a wire rack and leave them to cool.

Microtips

To freshen slightly stale yeast cakes, loosely wrap slices in stretch wrap. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds per piece. Serve immediately. The cake becomes dry when cool.

Continental coffee cakes

12 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 quantity Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981), risen
75g / 3oz granulated sugar
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
10ml / 2tsp ground cinnamon
100g / 4oz butter, diced

GLACÉ ICING
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted
water to mix

MAKES 2 CAKES, EACH SERVES 6-8

VARIATION
Flavour the icing with a few drops of peppermint essence or rum flavouring.

Cook's notes

Another method of proving bread dough is to stand the bowl on a wire baking tray above a sinkful of hot water. Cover bowl with towel. Leave dough until double in size.

Freezer notes

Freeze one Continental Coffee Cake, without icing. Wrap in a freezer bag. This can be stored for up to 6 months. To thaw, loosen wrap and thaw at room temperature. Ice cake after thawing.

How to microwave Continental coffee cakes

Lightly *grease two 23cm / 9in round shallow pie dishes. Prepare and rise the dough, then rest for 5 minutes. Divide the mixture in half and press it into the prepared dishes.*

Mix *the granulated and brown sugars, flour and cinnamon. Rub in the butter. Sprinkle half over the dough in each dish. Leave to rise, closely covered, for 1-2 hours.*

Place *one dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-9 minutes or until the top is springy when pressed with a finger. Give a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Repeat the procedure with the remaining dish of risen bread dough.*

Stand *for 5 minutes. Mix icing sugar with water to give a thick icing; drizzle over cakes, using a spoon. This makes an attractive pattern.*

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Spicy plum slice

7 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

You do not need the full quantity of dough for this recipe. Halve it and put the rest into an oiled polythene bag in the refrigerator. Use it the next day for a second recipe.

½ quantity Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981), risen
450g / 1lb small ripe plums, halved and stoned
30ml / 2tbls dark soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground mixed spice
50g / 2oz flaked almonds

SERVES 6-8

1 Divide the dough in half and refrigerate one half. Knead the rest lightly, then pat out to a

Spicy Plum Slice

23cm / 9in round, gradually stretching out the dough. Make a hole in the centre of the dough, then enlarge it with the fingers and turn the edge under until the hole is about 7.5cm / 3in wide.
2 Place the ring of dough on a microwave baking tray. Mix the sugar with the cinnamon and sprinkle over the top. Scatter over the almonds.
3 Cover loosely and leave in a warm place to rise for 20-30 minutes, until doubled in size.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-12 minutes, arranging plums on top 4 minutes before end of cooking time, giving the tray a quarter turn every 3-4 minutes. Allow to stand on the tray for 2 minutes.

VARIATION
Use the same quantity of apricot halves; sprinkle with almonds.

Iced tea ring

7¾ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

1 quantity Basic Rich Bread Dough (see Part 36, page 981), risen
75g / 3oz raisins
40g / 1½oz butter

DECORATION
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted
water to mix
8 glacé cherries

SERVES 6-8

1 Prepare and rise the dough according to the recipe and allow to rest for 5 minutes. Turn out on to a lightly floured surface and knead in the raisins.
2 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, or until melted.
3 Divide dough into eight pieces; dip each in melted butter.
4 Lightly oil a 2.0L / 3½pt ring dish. Arrange the pieces of buttered dough around the ring. Leave to rise, loosely covered, in a warm place for 1-2 hours, until doubled in size.
5 Place the dish on an inverted plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-2 minutes, or until the top springs back when pressed lightly, giving a quarter turn every minute. Stand in the dish for 2 minutes, loosen the edges with a palette knife and turn out to cool on a wire rack.
6 When cool, mix the icing sugar with sufficient water to make a thick icing, and spoon it over the cake. Decorate with cherries.

Microtips

Do not use microwave to rise dough for iced Tea Ring after pieces have been dipped in butter, rise it at room temperature instead. Microwave energy will be attracted to the butter which may start to cook the dough prematurely.

Aspics and savoury jellies

Aspic — clear savoury jelly — is marvellously easy to microwave. Use it to give meat, poultry and fish party pieces a sparkling finish or to make sophisticated savoury mousses and moulds.

Aspic is made from rich meat, poultry or fish stock, flavoured with vegetables and herbs. The stock is clarified to make it transparent and if needed, gelatine is added to help the set. It is more conveniently sold in powder form.

Gelatine or sweet jelly tablets* can also be used to set and mould savoury ingredients. For dissolving instructions see Part 41, page 1115.

Using aspic

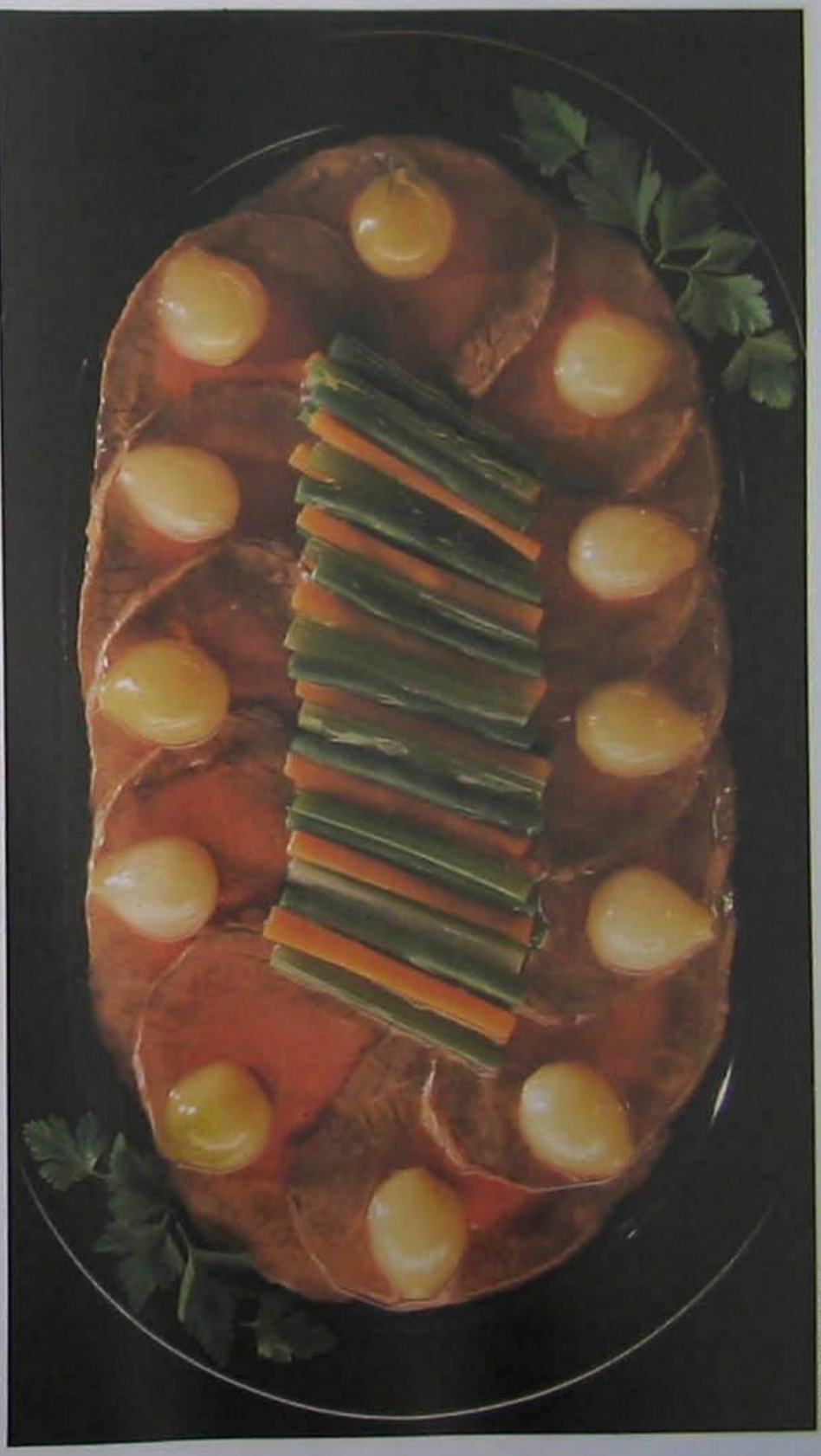
Aspic powder* is quickly and easily dissolved in the microwave. Sprinkle over liquid, microwave until hot then just stir to dissolve. Chill the jelly until syrupy or the consistency of unbeaten egg white, and it is ready to use.

Aspic can be used to coat whole fish, such as salmon (see recipe), or individual portions and slices of chicken or meat. These are made even more attractive if a garnish is also set in aspic. Be creative with your choice of garnish here; wafer-thin slices of cucumber or radish, shapes cut from carrot or pepper or sprigs of fresh herbs. The jelly itself can be used as a garnish, see steps, page 1504.

Whole boned and rolled joints can also be coated in aspic. A whole, stuffed chicken coated in chaufroid sauce — a white sauce set with gelatine, see Part 19, page 521 — looks stunning brushed with aspic.

Use aspic, too, to line a mould before filling with a savoury mousse mixture or finely chopped meat or poultry, vegetables fish or seafood.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
For jelly tablets use jelly crystals, dissolved as instructed. For aspic, use gelatine and stock.



Boeuf à la Mode

ANDREW WHEATLEY

How to dissolve and use aspic powder

Sprinkle *32.5ml / 6½tsp aspic powder over 150ml / ¼pt cold water or stock. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, until dissolved, stirring twice. Make up to 500ml / 17fl oz with water.*

Cool *the aspic jelly until syrupy — like unbeaten egg white. Place food to be coated on a rack or platter and brush or spoon over a thin layer of the jelly. Dip garnishes in the aspic and arrange on the food. Coat again and chill.*

Pour *aspic into a shallow dish and chill until set. Using a wet knife, cut the set aspic vertically and horizontally into even dice. Remove from the dish with a moistened metal spatula.*

To make *shapes, set the aspic in a shallow dish, then cut out small shapes using a wet knife or moistened canapé or petits fours cutter. Remove shapes with moistened spatula.*

Aspic-glazed salmon

18 mins

Standing time: none

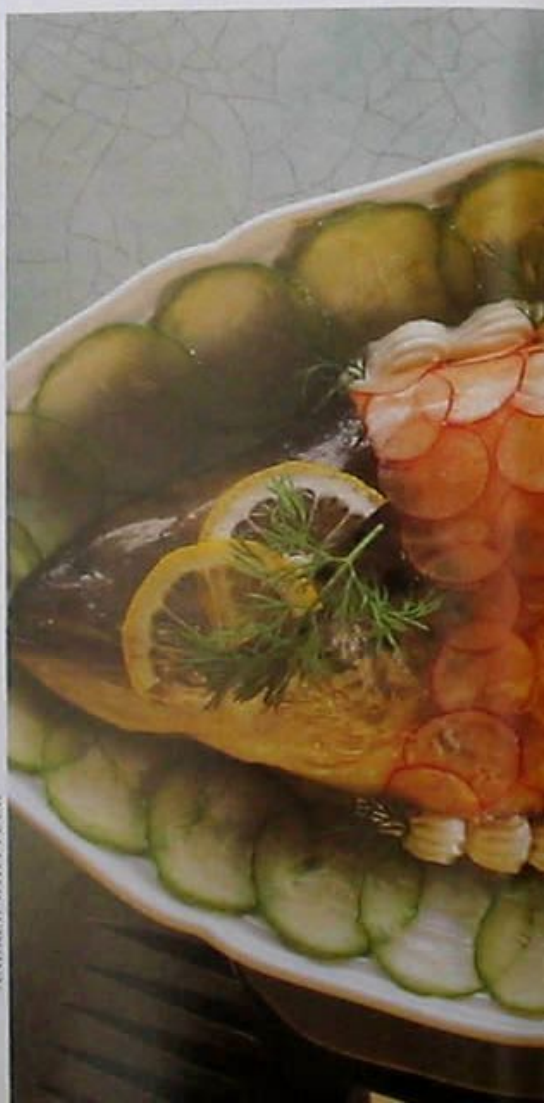
1.7kg / 3¾lb salmon*, gutted, cleaned and halved
1 carrot, sliced
1 small onion, sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 lemon, sliced
3-4 white peppercorns
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
125ml / 4fl oz water

ASPIC GARNISH
150ml / ¼pt mayonnaise
5ml / 1tsp powdered gelatine dissolved in 30ml / 2tbls very hot water
500ml / 17fl oz aspic jelly, see steps above
100g / 4oz radishes, finely sliced
dill sprigs
½ cucumber, thinly sliced
1 lemon slice, halved

SERVES 6-8

1 Prick the salmon skin in several places to prevent it bursting.
2 Place vegetables, flavourings and liquid in a shallow 30cm / 12in square dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes.
3 Add the salmon, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-18 minutes, until the fish just flakes. Give the dish a half turn once and shield the head and tail with two small pieces of smooth foil. Uncover and cool.
4 Peel away the fish skin, leaving the head and tail intact.
5 Mix the mayonnaise with the dissolved gelatine and chill for 15 minutes, or until thickened. Place the salmon halves together on a serving platter and fill any gap with mayonnaise. Chill.
6 Chill the aspic jelly until syrupy. Spoon a thin layer over fish.
7 Dip the radish slices into the aspic and arrange like scales on the fish. Dip five dill sprigs in aspic and set on top. Chill to set.
8 Discard any aspic from base of fish. Surround the fish with cucumber slices and sprigs of dill and garnish head with lemon slices and dill. Spoon remaining aspic jelly over fish and 'flood' the dish and cucumber with aspic. Chill for ½-1 hour, until set.
9 Pipe the remaining mayonnaise around the fish.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use snapper or Kingfish instead. Leave head and tail intact.



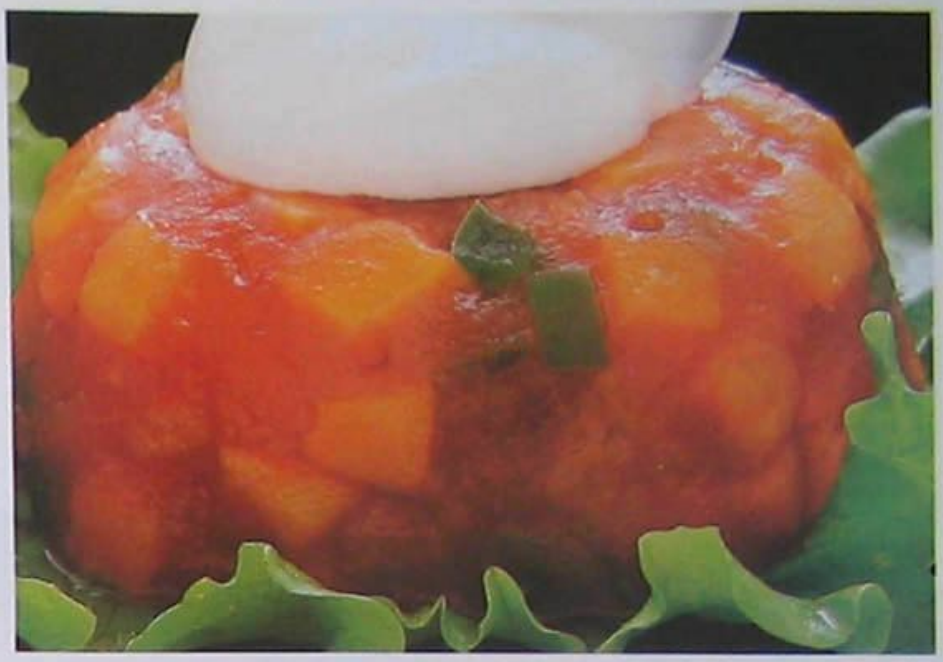
ANDREW WHITTUCK

Aspic-glazed Salmon

Moulded tomato savoury

2 mins

Standing time: none



350ml / 12fl oz tomato juice
1 beef stock cube dissolved in 90ml / 6tbls hot water
1 sachet or 17.5ml / 3½tsp powdered gelatine
20ml / 4tsp lemon juice
grated zest of ½ small lemon
2.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce
pepper, to taste
6 drops Tabasco sauce
284g / 9½oz can diced carrots, drained
½ green pepper, chopped
1 small onion, chopped

SERVES 6

1 Add sufficient tomato juice to the beef stock to make up to 250ml / 8fl oz. Sprinkle the powdered gelatine over this, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes. Stir briskly to dissolve.
2 Blend in remaining tomato juice, lemon juice and zest, Worcestershire, pepper and Tabasco.
3 Chill for 1-2 hours, until syrupy. Add carrots, pepper and onion.
4 Pour into a 1.1L / 2pt mould and chill overnight to set.
5 To serve, dip the mould or moulds briefly into hot water.

Cook's notes

To make unmoulding easier, rinse out the mould with cold water before adding the syrupy jelly mixture and dip mould in hot water to turn out.

Boeuf à la mode

55 mins

Standing time: 20 mins

This elegant party dish of aspic coated beef and vegetables is a speciality of France.

1.4kg / 3lb boneless topside or silverside, tied to a neat compact shape
1 onion, sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
2 bay leaves
few parsley sprigs
1 garlic clove, crushed (optional)
150ml / ¼pt red or white wine
salt and pepper
32.5ml / 6½tsp aspic powder

VEGETABLE GARNISH
2 small carrots, cut into thin strips
6 button onions, halved
2 celery stalks, quartered and cut into thin strips
75g / 3oz French beans, topped and tailed

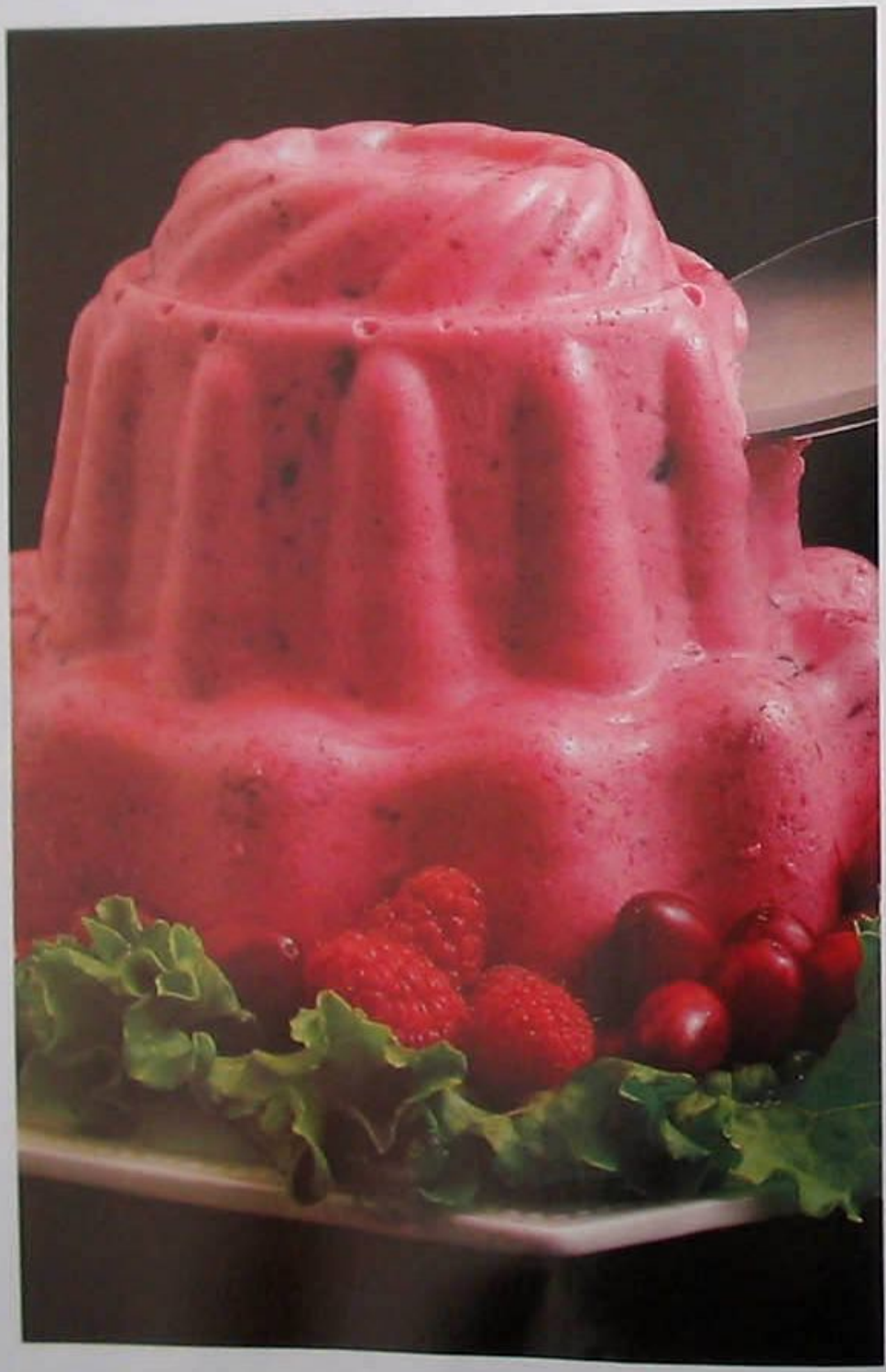
SERVES 6

1 Place the meat in a bowl with the onion, celery, bay leaves, parsley, garlic if used, and wine. Blend well. Cover and marinate for 2-4 hours, or overnight in the refrigerator, turning occasionally.
2 Remove the meat from the marinade and place in a large roasting or boiling bag. Strain the marinade into the bag and fasten it with a rubber band.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes. Turn the beef in the bag over, reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 20 minutes, rotating the dish once. Open the bag.
4 Turn the meat over and add the vegetables for the garnish and season to taste. Re-fasten the bag and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25 minutes, giving the dish two half turns during cooking. Leave to stand in the closed bag for 20 minutes.
5 Remove the meat and vegetables from the juices with a slotted spoon. Slice the meat and arrange around the edge of a platter with the onion halves, arrange the remaining vegetables in the centre. Leave to cool.
6 Strain the juices from the bag through a fine nylon sieve into a measuring jug and make up to 500ml / 17fl oz with water or wine, if necessary. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes until almost boiling. Sprinkle over the aspic powder and stir briskly to dissolve.
7 Cool the jelly until syrupy but still liquid, then spoon it carefully over the meat and vegetables until they are evenly coated. Chill for ½-1 hour until set.

Microtips

If wished, dissolve aspic powder by microwaving 500ml / 7fl oz liquid at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until very hot then sprinkle over powder and stir briskly with a fork until the powder has dissolved and the liquid is clear.

If jelly becomes unworkable when using as a coating, microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds to soften it. Chill again if necessary.



Bitter-sweet fruit mould

3 mins

Standing time: none

This colourful mousse can be served as an unusual accompaniment for roast poultry or as a tangy dessert.

275ml / ½pt unsweetened grape juice
175ml / 6fl oz red wine
125ml / 4fl oz water
2 sachets or 35ml / 7tsp powdered gelatine
175g / 6oz cranberry sauce
125ml / 4fl oz chilled whipped cream
40g / 1½oz chopped walnuts or pecans

SERVES 8

1 Place the grape juice, wine and water in a large bowl and sprinkle over the powdered gelatine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then stir to dissolve.
2 Stir in the cranberry sauce then chill in the refrigerator for about 1 hour or until syrupy.
3 Fold in cream and nuts and pour into a 1.1L / 2pt mould. Chill for 3-4 hours, or until set. To unmould, dip briefly in hot water.

Hallowe'en jelly

3 mins

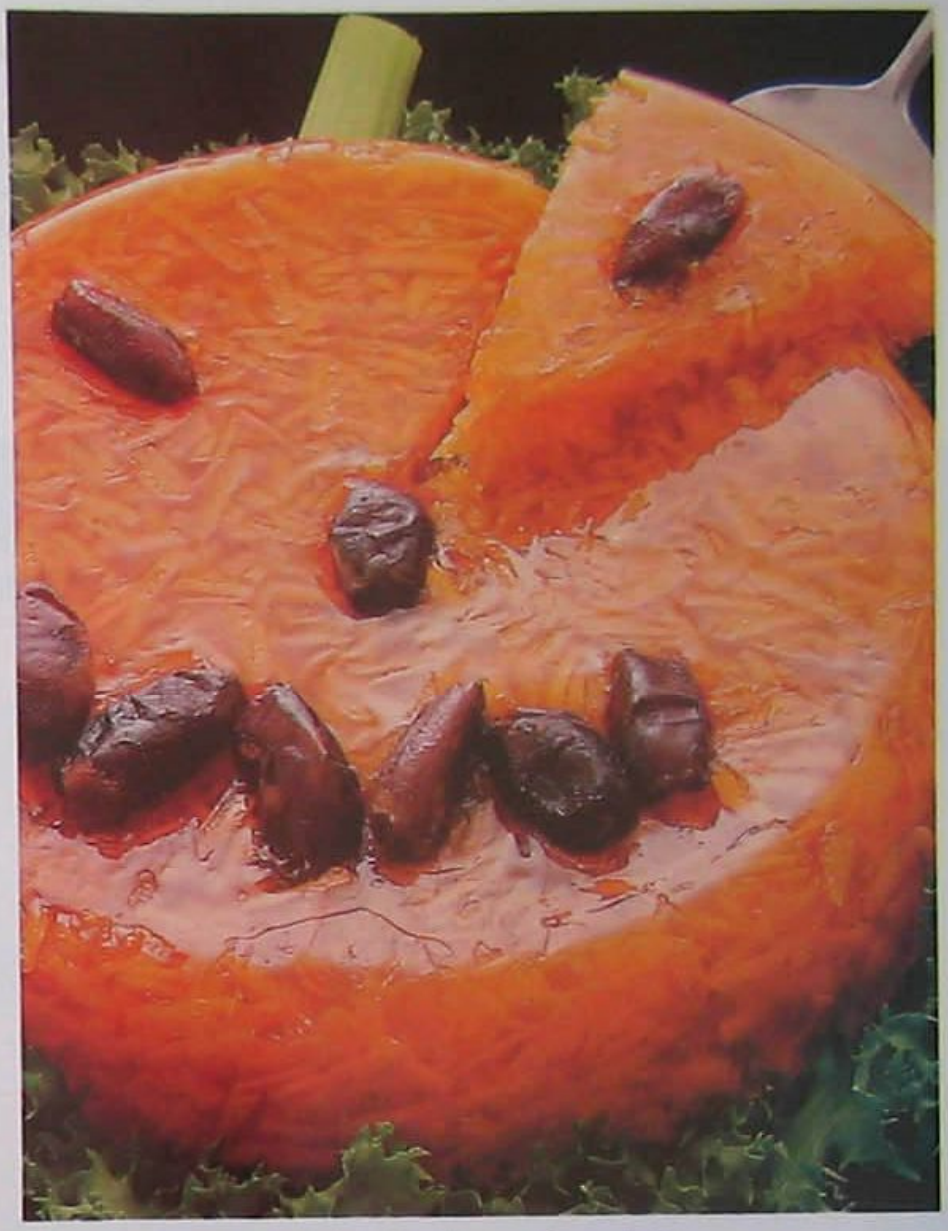
Standing time: none

425ml / ¾pt hot water
2 orange jelly tablets*, cubed
425ml / ¾pt cold water
450g / 1lb carrots, grated
curly endive, stoned dates and celery stalk to garnish

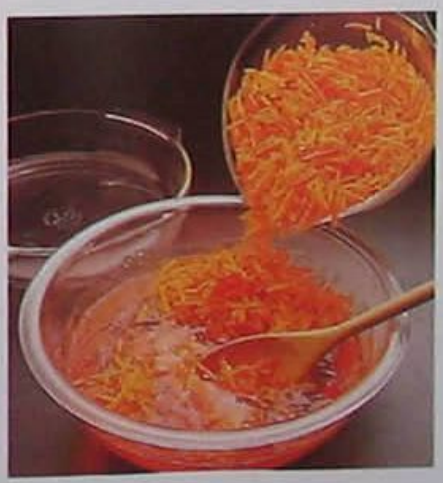
SERVES 10-12

1 Place the hot water and jelly cubes in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once, until dissolved.
2 Add the cold water and chill for about 1 hour, until syrupy. Assemble following steps right.

Left: *Bitter-Sweet Fruit Mould*
Right: *Hallowe'en Jelly*



How to assemble Hallowe'en jelly



Stir *in the carrots, mixing well. Pour into a 23cm / 9in round dish. Chill for 2-4 hours, until set. To unmould, dip the dish in hot water.*

Surround *with curly endive. Position dates on the top to form a pumpkin face and use the celery stick as a stem. Serve chilled, cut in wedges.*

STAR RECIPE

Sweet 'n' sour chicken

For a truly memorable main course, a perfect balance of taste and texture, try these tender chicken breasts, rolled round a flavoursome filling and bathed in a fruity, sweet and sour sauce.

Contrast the spiced flavour of moist-cooked chicken with the sharp, fruitiness and juicy textures of pineapple and grapes. This dish is special enough for entertaining, yet quick and easy enough to be a firm family favourite. Serve the chicken in its tangy sweet and sour sauce on a bed of fluffy boiled rice with a dish of colourful stir-fried vegetables or greens to give eye appeal.

If you do not have a meat mallet, put the meat between two sheets of wet greaseproof paper and use a wooden rolling pin to beat out the chicken breasts. Make sure they are thin enough to fold the edges over the filling. The rolls should keep their shape during microwaving; if they start to unroll, secure with a wooden cocktail stick. (Remember to remove these before serving).

Slimmer's notes

This super, stylish dish is also a good choice if you are watching your waistline. Low in fat, yet high in protein, it provides only 300Cal / 1260 kJ per serving.

Sweet 'n' sour chicken

13 mins

Standing time: none

4 boneless chicken breasts (about 175g / 6oz each), skinned
227g / 8oz can pineapple chunks in natural juice
125ml / 4fl oz water
30ml / 2tbls marmalade
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
7.5ml / 1½tsp white wine vinegar
½ chicken stock cube
100g / 4oz seedless green grapes, halved

FILLING
2-3 spring onions, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp dried or 10ml / 2tsp fresh parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground coriander
pinch of garlic powder
pinch of pepper

SERVES 4

Microtips

The flavour of this dish is even better if it is made in advance and kept, covered in the refrigerator overnight. To reheat, microwave, covered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 10-12 minutes. Should you wish to freeze the chicken, refrigerate it in the same way, to give a better flavour when the dish is thawed out and reheated.

How to microwave Sweet 'n' Sour Chicken

Beat out *each piece of chicken between two sheets of greaseproof paper until 6mm / ¼in thick. Mix together all the ingredients for the filling in a bowl.*

Spread *about 5ml / 1tsp of the filling over each piece of chicken. Fold the sides of the chicken over the filling and roll up neatly.*

Arrange *the chicken rolls, seam side down, in a large shallow dish. Drain and reserve the juice from the pineapples and add the chunks to the dish.*

Mix *the pineapple juice with all the remaining ingredients except the grapes in a jug, stirring thoroughly to make a smooth sauce.*

Microwave *the sauce at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thick, stirring every minute. Pour the sauce over the chicken and cover the dish.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink, turning the dish once. Add the grapes during the last 2 minutes.*

Microwaving cherries

From deliciously moist cakes and luscious pies to rich, dark sauces, compotes and cobblers, cherries cooked in the microwave are an instant success. Use them fresh or canned for dessert and tea-time treats.

Ripe cherries are a wonderful fruit — succulent, juicy and full of flavour. The vibrant colours, which range from a rich purple that is almost black right through to milky white, make them instantly appealing — so appealing that the temptation is to eat them fresh, rather than to try cooking them. Let these recipes show you the way to mouth-watering cherry desserts and cakes; they will show you too, how the microwave retains the natural goodness of the fruit, as well as its magnificent colour.

The deep scarlet or purplish black cherries are the best for cooking as they are the most flavoursome as well as the most colourful. They will generally need washing and stoning before using. Canned cherries are also good for cooking; drain them well and stone if necessary. If you want to keep cherries whole during cooking, you will have to stone them with a special cherry stoner. Otherwise halve the fruit and remove the stone with a knife.

Selecting cherries

Look for firm, ripe, brightly coloured cherries. Sweet varieties

Cherry Cheesecake

may be bright red to black, white or golden. Avoid fruit that is sticky, soft or shows brown spots and splitting skin. Over-ripe cherries appear dull, shrivelled or leaking, and stems fall out easily. Immature cherries are small, hard, and will not ripen.

Storing cherries
Cherries keep for up to 3 days in the crisper compartment of the refrigerator. Always remove any bruised fruit first before storing, and pat dry with absorbent paper as moisture or condensation causes mould. Wash the cherries in cold running water and remove any stalks just before using in recipes. Leave stalks attached if using in a fruit bowl.

Cherry cheesecake

25¼ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz margarine
few drops of almond flavouring
175g / 6oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed

FILLING
450g / 1lb full-fat soft or cream cheese
75ml / 5tbls caster sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
few drops of almond flavouring
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
½ × 250g / 9oz natural yoghurt

TOPPING
75ml / 3fl oz water
5ml / 1½tsp arrowroot
30ml / 2tbls redcurrant jelly
283g / 10oz can black cherries, drained, with 15ml / 1tbls syrup reserved

SERVES 6-8

Cook's notes

Arrowroot makes an ideal glaze for highlighting fruit toppings. It gives a clear, transparent result so the cherries stand out well. Redcurrant jelly is used here to help give the glaze a rich colour.

How to microwave Cherry cheesecake

Line *a 20-23cm / 8-9in flan dish with greaseproof paper. Cut two strips of greaseproof paper and lay at right angles across the dish, overhanging at the edges.*

Microwave *margarine, covered, in a large bowl at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Stir in flavouring and biscuit crumbs. Press mixture in dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.*

For filling: *place cheese in a large bowl. Combine sugar and cornflour; beat into the cheese with flavouring, eggs and yoghurt. Pour into prepared dish and stand on an upturned saucer.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 1 minute, rotating half a turn once. Reduce power to 30% (Low) for 20-25 minutes, until set but soft in centre; rotate a quarter turn every 4 minutes.*

RAY DUNN

Cool *cheesecake in the dish on a wire rack, then chill overnight. To decorate, microwave water and arrowroot in a bowl at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds.*

Stir *in the jelly and reserved cherry syrup. Stone and halve the cherries and arrange around the edge of the cheese cake. Spoon the arrowroot glaze over the cherries and serve.*

Cherry lemon cakes

12½ mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
6 digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
400g / 14oz can sweetened condensed milk
2 eggs
2 lemons
450g / 1lb cherries, stoned
100g / 4oz sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour

MAKES 12

1 Arrange six double paper cake cases in a ring on a plate. Arrange another six on a second plate in the same way.

2 Put the butter in to a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the crumbs, then divide equally between the paper cases, pressing down firmly with the back of a spoon.

3 Beat together the condensed milk and eggs. Add 15ml / 1tbls grated lemon zest and gradually stir in the juice from both lemons until the mixture thickens. Spoon equally into the paper cases, covering the crumbs.

4 Microwave six cakes at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, or until bubbling, rotating plate a half turn after 1 minute; cool. Repeat with remaining cakes.

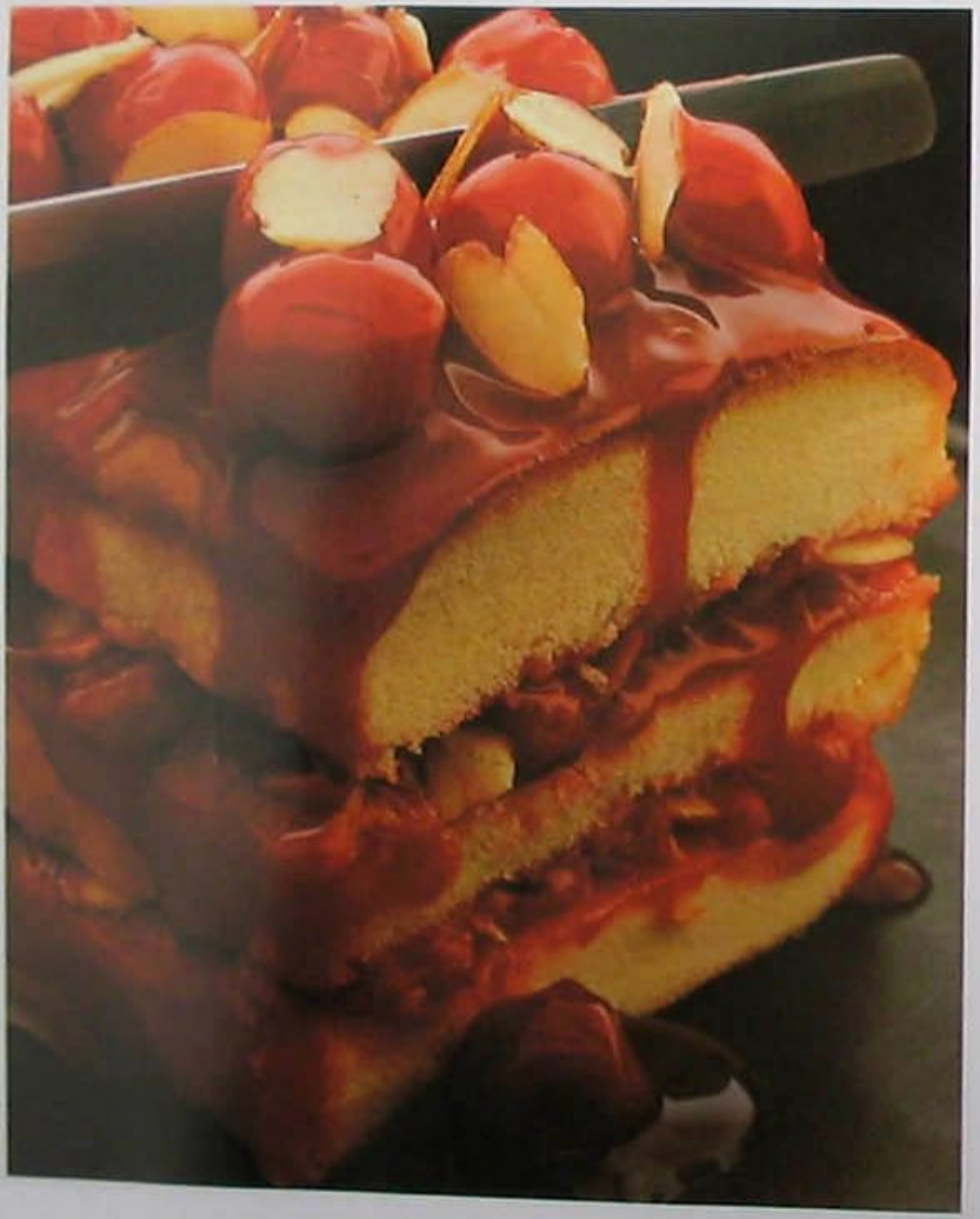
5 Wash the cherries and place in a bowl with the sugar and cornflour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the mixture is thick and clear, stirring every 2 minutes.

6 Peel away the paper cases from the cakes. Spoon the cherry topping over them to serve.

VARIATION
Crushed ginger biscuits also make a good base for these cakes.

Cook's notes

Use two paper cake cases for each cake to help support the mixture. Make sure the crumbs are pushed well down into the cases, otherwise they will move during cooking.



Cherry layer cake

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz butter
100g / 4oz caster sugar
pinch of ground cinnamon
2 eggs, beaten
grated zest of ½ small lemon
175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
45ml / 3tbls milk

FILLING
397g / 14oz can cherry fruit filling*
1.5ml / ¼tsp almond flavouring or 30ml / 2tbls Amaretto liqueur

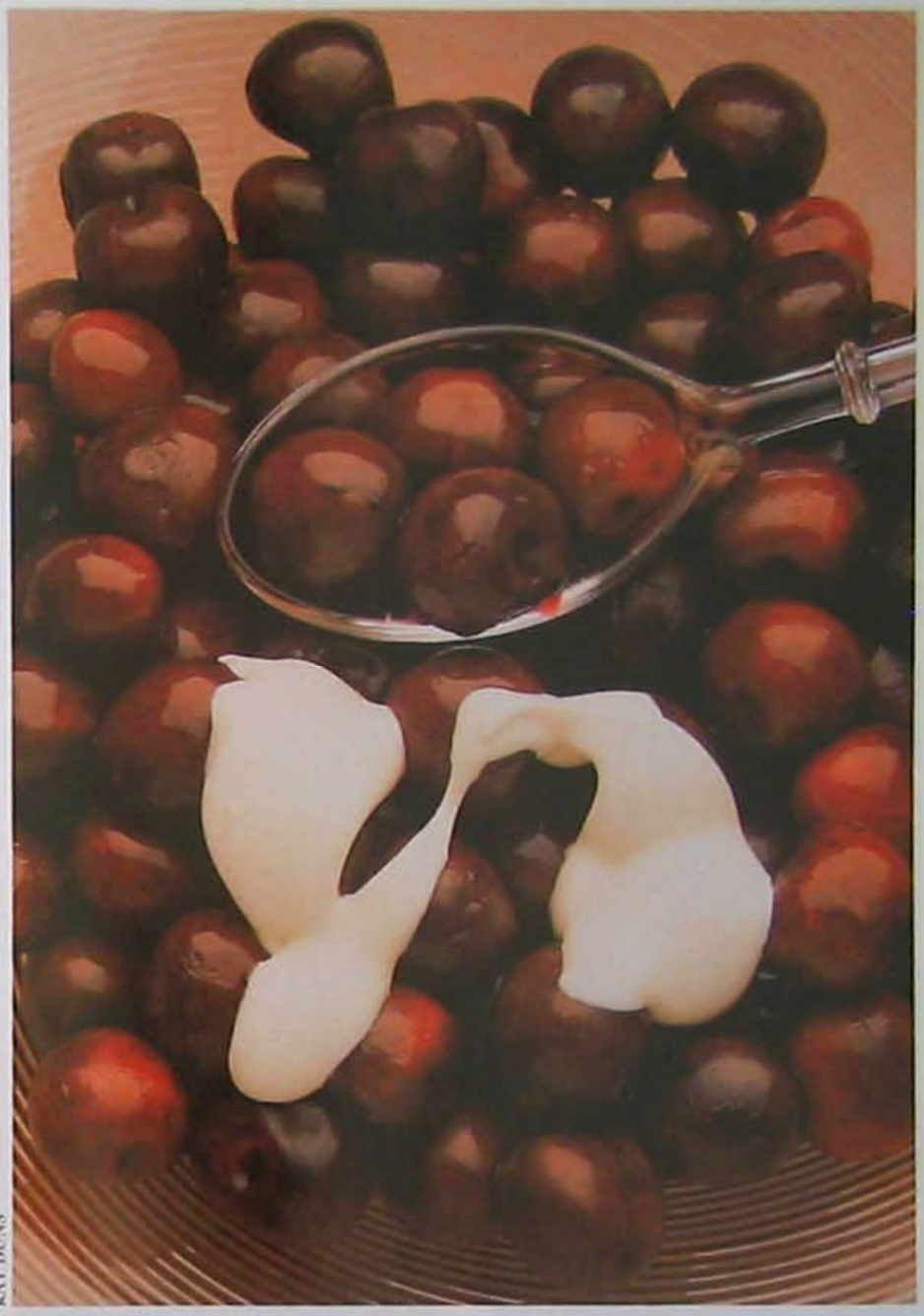
SERVES 6-8

1 Line the base of a loaf dish, measuring 21.5 × 11.5cm / 8½ × 4½ in and 7.5cm / 3in deep, with greaseproof paper.
2 Put the butter into a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 seconds to soften. Add the sugar, cinnamon, eggs and lemon zest and beat until fluffy.
3 Fold in the flour, salt and baking powder, then add the milk. Turn into the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes.
4 Cover with absorbent paper and stand for 5 minutes. Turn out and cool on a wire rack.
5 Put the cherry filling into a bowl with the flavouring.
6 Cut the cooled cake lengthways into three slices. Place the bottom slice on a serving plate and spoon over one-third of the fruit, filling, then 15ml / 1tbls flaked almonds. Repeat with the remaining layers. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes to heat. Top with some toasted flaked almonds.

VARIATION
Use bought Madeira cake, if liked, splitting in three to fill.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use fresh cherries, following stage 5 in Cherry Lemon Cakes. Add 1.5ml / ¼tsp almond flavouring.

Cherry Layer Cake



RAY DUNS

Marsala cherries

9 mins

Standing time: none

900g / 2lb cherries, washed and dried, stalks removed
150ml / ¼pt Marsala or medium-sweet sherry
15ml / 1tbls sugar
15ml / 3tsp arrowroot
15ml / 1tbls water
150ml / ¼pt double cream, whipped, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Place cherries in a bowl with the Marsala and sugar and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until sugar is dissolved and cherries are tender, stir twice.
2 Strain the cherries, reserving the liquid. Place the cherries in a serving dish and set aside. Mix together the arrowroot and water and stir into the reserved cherry liquid. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring two or three times until just slightly thickened to a syrup.
3 Pour the syrup over the cherries and cool. Chill for 1 hour, top with whipped cream.

Marsala Cherries

How to microwave Cherry cobbler

Cherry cobbler

10 mins

Standing time: none

The cake-like topping perfectly complements these juicy cherries.

4 × 213g / 7½oz cans red cherries in syrup, drained and stoned, 175ml / 6fl oz syrup reserved
7.5ml / 1½tsp cornflour

TOPPING
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
50g / 2oz caster sugar
pinch of salt
30ml / 2tbls milk
1 egg, beaten
25g / 1oz melted butter
75ml / 5tbls cornflakes, crushed, or 60ml / 4tbls plain sweet biscuit crumbs
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 6

VARIATION
Use fresh cherries instead of canned. Microwave 700g / 1½lb cherries with 175ml / 6fl oz water and 100g / 4oz sugar in a bowl at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring twice. Drain, reserving the juice, then blend the cornflour into the drained juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes; stir twice. Place in pie plate with cherries; continue with step 2.

Mix *reserved cherry syrup with cornflour in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring twice. Place in 25cm / 10in pie plate with cherries. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.*

For topping: *sieve the flour into bowl and add the sugar, salt and milk, egg and butter, mixing until well blended. Combine crumbs and cinnamon in a bowl. Divide the scone mixture into six equal pieces and form into flat cakes.*

Roll *each of the flattened cakes in the crumbs to coat and arrange around the edge of the cherry mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until topping is springy; rotate half a turn once. Serve hot with cream.*

Cherry lattice pie

10½ mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370),
75g / 3oz shortcrust pastry, thawed if frozen

FILLING
700g / 1½lb cherries, stoned
150g / 5oz sugar
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
60ml / 4tbls* cornflour

SERVES 6

1 Wash the cherries and place in a bowl together with the sugar, lemon juice and cornflour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until clear and thickened, stirring every 2 minutes. Leave to cool slightly before using to fill the cooked pastry case.
2 Meanwhile, make the lattice. Roll out shortcrust pastry to a 20cm / 8in circle. Use a pastry cutter to cut into ten 12mm / ½in strips. Arrange in a lattice pattern on a double layer of absorbent paper.
3 Microwave the lattice on the absorbent paper for 2½-3½ minutes, rotating a quarter turn every minute. Leave to cool slightly then carefully transfer to the pie. Serve at once or chill.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 3tbls cornflour

Cherry almond sauce

6½ mins

Standing time: none

Perfect for ice cream, this simple sauce is even more delicious served with a scattering of toasted almonds.

450g / 1lb cherries, stoned
100g / 4oz sugar
150ml / ¼pt water
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
few drops of almond flavouring

SERVES 4-6

Cherry Lattice Pie

1 Wash the cherries and place in a bowl together with the sugar and water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the cherries are tender, stirring once. Drain the cherries, reserving the juice.
2 Blend the cornflour into the reserved cherry juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until thickened and bubbling, stirring twice.
3 Add the cherries to the sauce in the bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to heat through.
4 Stir in the almond flavouring and serve hot over ice cream or sponge desserts. Store as directed in Cook's notes, right.

Cook's notes

Cherry Almond Sauce keeps well in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Transfer the sauce to a glass jar when cooled and seal firmly with an airtight lid.

Freezer notes

Cherries are commercially available stoned and frozen. If freezing your own, wash and dry, remove stalks and stone. Open-freeze before packing in freezer bags.

Thaw 450g / 1lb in a bowl at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6-8 minutes; stir twice. Stand 10 minutes.

Plan ahead: menu 2

It takes less than half-an-hour's microwaving time to produce this tasty dinner for two. Freeze each course and all you have to do on the special day is to take a few minutes to thaw and reheat the food.

Make the most of a microwave / freezer combination, using it to prepare and freeze small quantities as well as large. A special meal for two is a perfect candidate for this plan, as it leaves you free to be with your dinner guest, rather than slaving away in the kitchen. Make up the menu and freeze it; then let your microwave do the work while you enjoy the evening.

Choosing a menu

Cooking for just two people allows for greater flexibility in choice than you have with large numbers. It is quite possible, for example, to have both a hot starter and main course as the smaller quantities require less microwaving time.

A meal for two should be friendly rather than formal. The Fruity Sausage appetizer fits the bill excellently. Simple to make up and freeze, serve it with wooden cocktail sticks as you enjoy your pre-dinner drinks. The Beef and Pepper Sauté is a slightly exotic main course, a little fiddly to prepare perhaps, but well worth the trouble. It freezes beautifully and thawing and reheating are simple.

The Mini Chocolate Gateau adds a touch of luxury to the evening; this is not a matter of serving a couple of slices of cake, but a whole miniature cake made just for two. It keeps best if frozen un-iced. Thaw and assemble it an hour or two before you plan to serve the meal to save yourself time and trouble when you want to be relaxing over drinks and appetizers.

Freezing

Pack the first two courses in rigid containers, labelling them clearly. Freeze the cake and icing separately; you can then thaw the cake without worrying about the icing melting. Remember to label all courses with 'Menu for 2' (see Freezer notes, below).

Menu planning

To spend the minimum of time in the kitchen and enjoy the meal to the full, careful planning is important. Thaw all courses and assemble the cake and icing an hour or two before you are planning to serve the meal.

When you feel ready to eat, just microwave the Fruity Sausages and serve as suggested above. Heat the Beef and Pepper Sauté while enjoying your first course — if necessary it will retain its heat for several minutes if tightly covered. Prepare the main course accompaniments of rice and carrots as suggested in the Microtips, below.

Microtips

To serve the Beef and Pepper Sauté with rice, thaw the sauté and cook the rice in advance. Fifteen minutes before eating, reheat rice at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes; leave covered. Add cornflour to the sauté and reheat as directed. Meanwhile, drain a 395g / 14oz can baby carrots and put in a bowl with 30ml / 2tbls of juice from the can. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes while dishing up the rice and sauté. Drain and serve with rice and meat.

Freezer notes

When freezing a whole menu it is important to label each item. For example, this meal can be labelled 'Menu for 2'; then underneath write the name of the dish together with freezer life and serving instructions.

Beef and pepper sauté

6¼ mins

Standing time: none

Thawing reheating: 11 mins

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
350g / 12oz sirloin steak, cut into thin strips
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into 12mm / ½in strips
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
3 spring onions, cut into 12mm / ½in pieces
1 garlic clove, crushed
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce

TO SERVE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water

SERVES 2

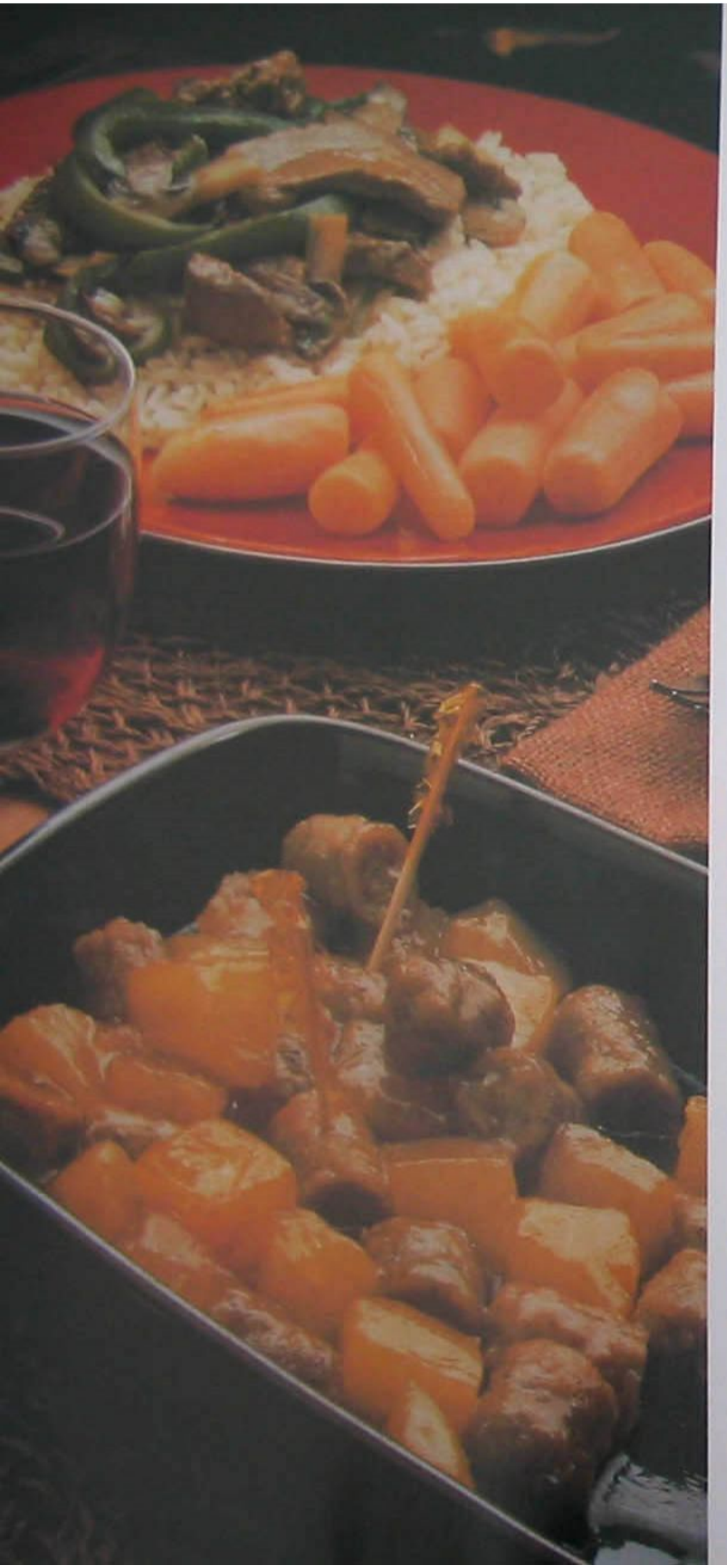
1 Place the butter in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted.
2 Stir in the steak, green pepper, mushrooms, spring onions, garlic, soy sauce, coating them with the butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the beef is no longer pink, stirring twice.
3 To freeze: cool, then transfer to a rigid freezer container. Cover, label and freeze for 2 months.

TO SERVE

To thaw, transfer the frozen sauté to a serving dish, cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the food can be broken apart with a fork.

To reheat, blend together the cornflour and water and stir into the beef. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 6-9 minutes, or until thickened and very hot, stirring once.

Above right: *Mini Chocolate Gateau*
Right: *Beef and Pepper Sauté*



Fruity sausages

3 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 6 mins

This tangy starter is really moreish. You can remove temptation by serving only half.

15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
pinch of ground ginger
pinch of garlic salt
15ml / 1tbls water
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
220g / 7¾oz can pineapple chunks in natural juice, drained, with 75ml / 3fl oz juice reserved
6 cooked chipolata sausages, cut into three pieces

SERVES 2

1 Blend together the sugar, cornflour, ginger, garlic salt, water, sauce and reserved pineapple juice in a casserole. Stir in pineapple and sausage.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until sauce is thickened, stirring three times.
3 To freeze: cool and pack in a rigid freezer container. Cover, label and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Uncover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4-6 minutes, breaking apart after 2 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish, increase power to 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until very hot; stir once.

Microtips

This makes a generous starter. If preferred, thaw the frozen dish, then divide in half. Reheat and serve one half and refrigerate the other up to 2 days. Microwave the refrigerated half at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes to reheat; stir once. Serve with rice or pasta to make a tasty supper for one.

Above left: *Beef and Pepper Sauté*
Left: *Fruity Sausages*

Mini chocolate gateau

3½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing time: 2½ mins

Standing after thawing: 5 mins

45ml / 3tbls* plain flour
75g / 3oz caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls cocoa powder
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls milk
1 egg
few drops of vanilla flavouring
almonds and cherry, to decorate

ICING
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted
15ml / 1tbls plus 5ml / 1tsp cocoa powder*
45ml / 3tbls softened butter
few drops of vanilla flavouring
30-45ml / 2-3tsp milk

SERVES 2-4

1 Line the bases of two 12.5-15cm / 5-6in shallow cake dishes with greaseproof paper.
2 Combine all cake ingredients. Divide equally between two dishes.
3 Place dishes on upturned saucers and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes, rearranging once. Increase power to 100% (High) for ½-1½ minutes; rearrange once. Stand layers for 5 minutes, then turn out to cool.
4 Combine icing ingredients except milk in a bowl. Add milk to make a spreading consistency.
5 To freeze and thaw cake and icing, see steps, below.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 2tbls plus 1tsp flour. 1tbls cocoa, for icing.

Cook's notes

If you do not have the right sized cake dishes for this mini gateau, use two 15cm / 6in soufflé dishes instead. Divide the cake mixture evenly between the two. Larger dishes give the finished cake a flatter appearance, but work just as well.

How to freeze and thaw Mini chocolate gateau

To freeze cake: *wrap in foil or place each layer in a freezer bag; seal. Freeze icing separately in a rigid freezer container. Freeze both cake and icing for up to 6 weeks.*

To thaw cake: *unwrap and place layers on a roasting rack or plate lined with absorbent paper. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-2 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.*

To thaw icing: *uncover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2½ minutes to soften. Spread some over tops of cake layers; sandwich together and ice sides. Decorate.*

Ham in a hurry

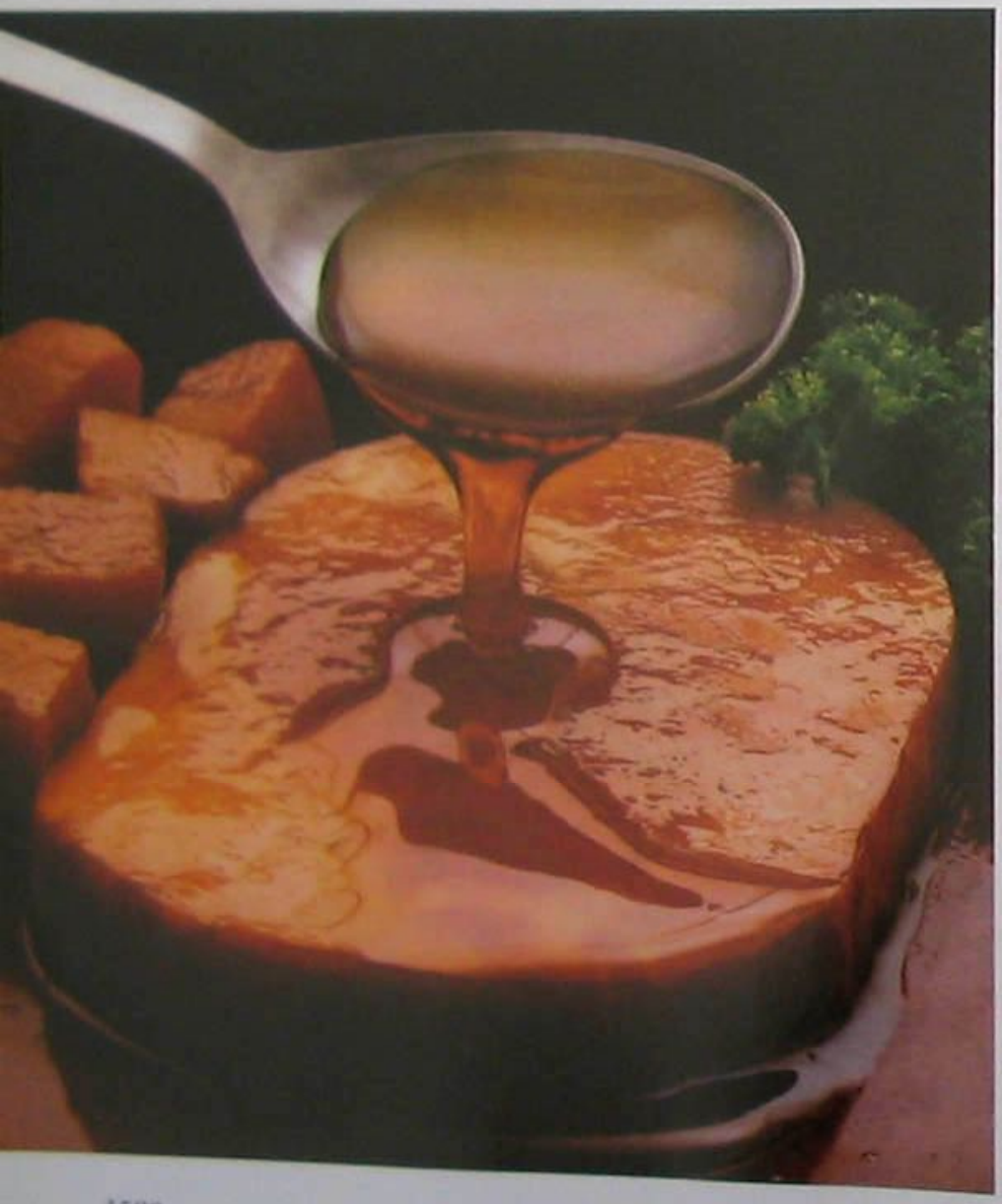
Short of time — and ideas — for a speedy snack or supper? Why not try ham? Whether microwaved with a simple sauce or combined with other ingredients it is sure to make a tempting, tasty dish.

Ham is a popular and versatile meat that lends itself to many sorts of dishes. Use it in casseroles or with fruity sauces and glazes since it combines so well with many vegetables, fruits and cheese.

Since the ham used in the recipes here is already cooked, it only needs to be heated through in the microwave, making the recipes extra speedy to cook.

Small amounts can be stretched to make a jacket potato meal or skewered with an assortment of fruits and vegetables and spiced with a gingery glaze. Tangy Ham Meatballs can be served as a main meal or used as dippers with your favourite sweet and sour sauce.

Thick slices of ham with fruit glazes or sauces are a popular combination, sure to please both family and friends. A warming ham casserole makes a substantial meal made simple by microwaving.



Hasty Hawaiian Ham

Hasty Hawaiian ham

5¾ mins

Standing time: none

2 × 339g / 12oz cans pineapple cubes, drained
450g / 1lb cooked boneless ham slices, 12mm / ½in thick
75ml / 5tbls golden syrup*
25g / 1oz dark brown sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
pinch of ground cloves

SERVES 4

1 Arrange pineapple cubes around a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in plate. Place ham slices down centre.
2 Make the glaze: combine syrup, sugar, mustard and cloves in a jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Pour half over ham.
3 Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes. Pour over remaining glaze. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1½-2 minutes, or until ham is hot.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
4tbls golden syrup

Cheesy ham and courgettes

11½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

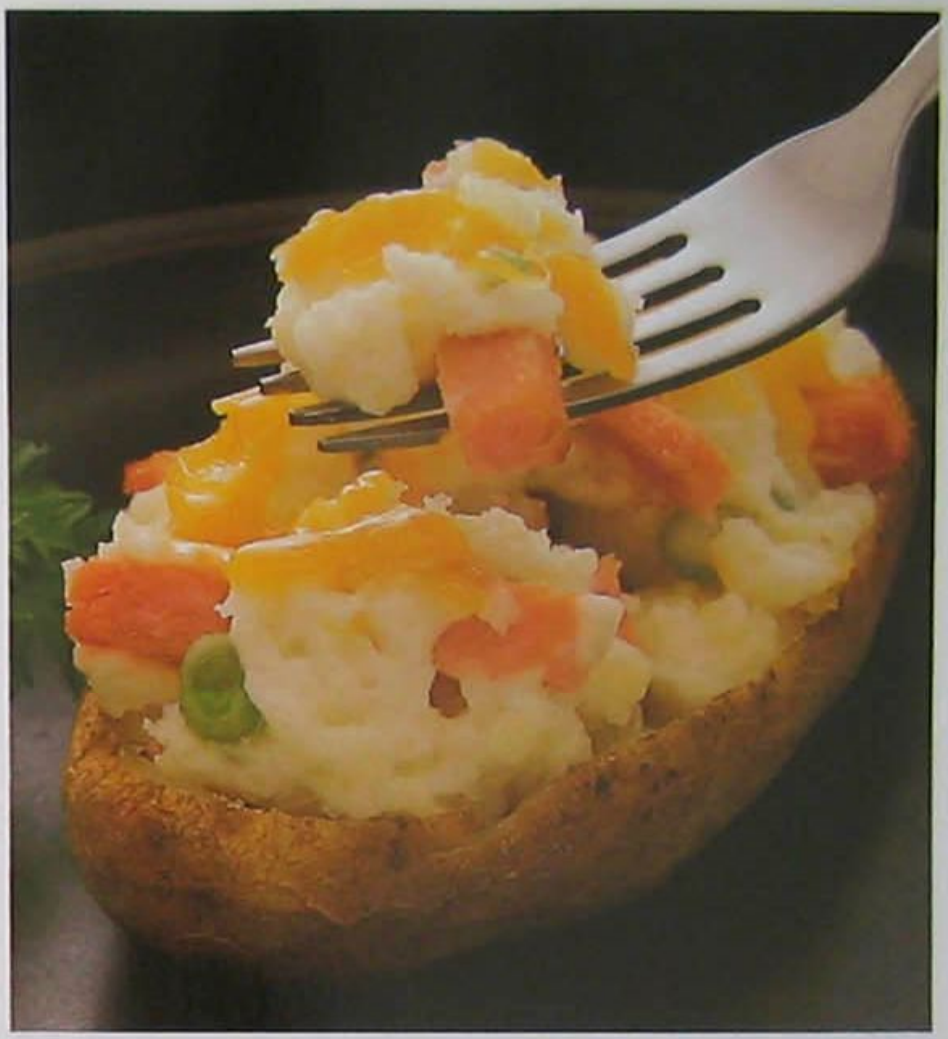
3-4 (450g / 1lb) courgettes, sliced
1 onion, chopped
60ml / 4tbls water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper to taste
225ml / 8fl oz milk
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
225g / 8oz cooked ham, cubed
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika
225g / 8oz noodles, cooked conventionally, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Combine courgettes, onion and water in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until courgettes are tender but still crisp. Leave to stand, covered for 3 minutes.
2 Place butter in a medium-sized bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until melted. Stir in flour and salt and pepper until smooth. Blend in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until heated through, stirring every minute. Stir in the cheese.
3 Drain the courgettes, then add the ham and cheese sauce to the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until heated through.
4 Stir well, sprinkle paprika on top and serve with noodles.

Slimmer's notes

For Ham Boats for slimmers, use 200g / 7oz potatoes, skimmed milk, plain yoghurt, and low fat Cheddar type cheese to give 285 Cal / 1195kJ per portion.



Above: *Ham Boats*
Left: *Cheesy Ham and Courgettes*

Ham boats

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Serve with a mixed salad, these stuffed jacket potatoes make a super lunch or satisfying supper.

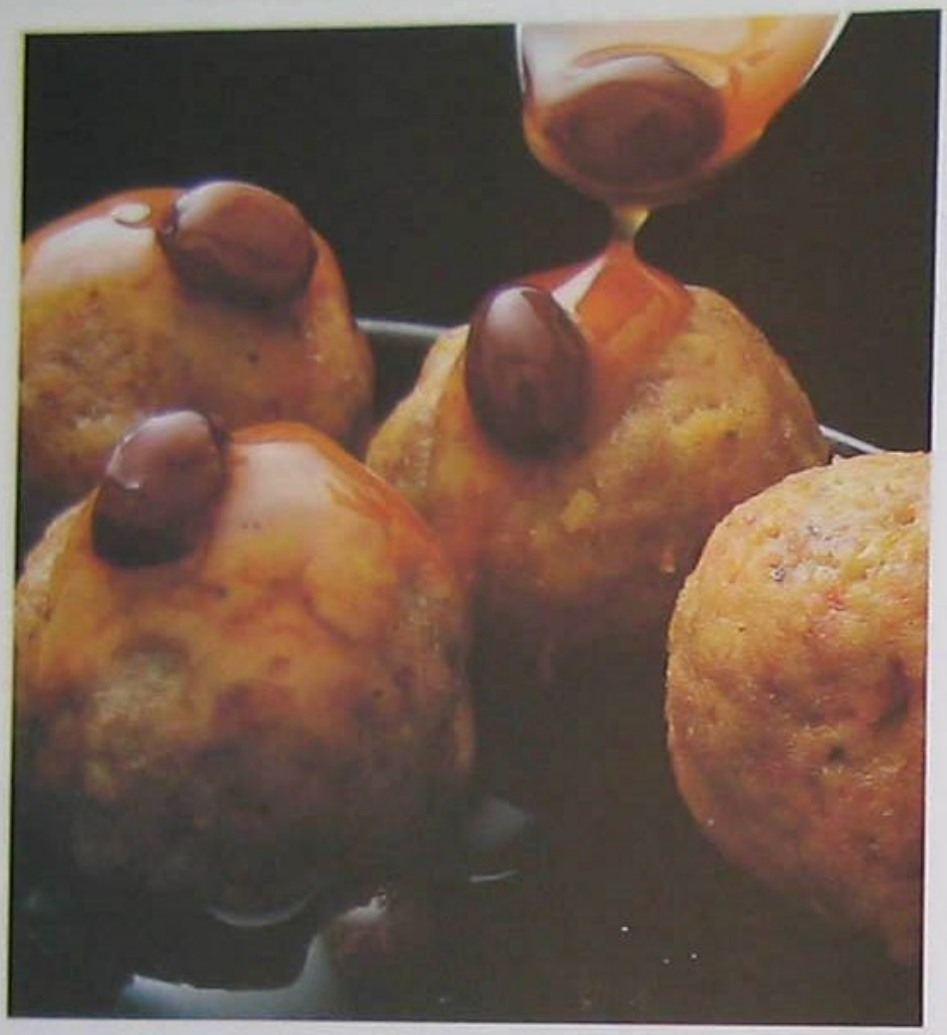
4 × 225g / 8oz baking potatoes, scrubbed and pricked
60ml / 4tbls milk
125ml / 4fl oz soured cream
100g / 4oz cooked, ham, cut into 5cm / 2in strips
2 spring onions, sliced
5ml / 1tsp mustard powder
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper

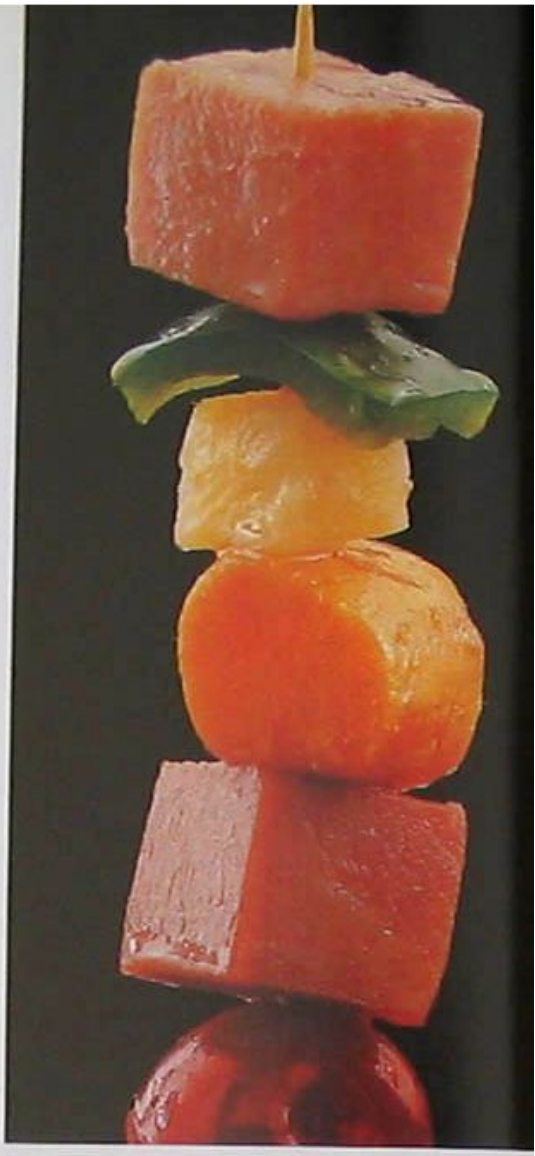
SERVES 4

1 Arrange the potatoes in a ring on a layer of absorbent paper in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 14-15 minutes, or until they can be pierced, turning over after half time. Wrap in foil, shiny side in, and stand for 5 minutes.
2 Slice each potato in half lengthways. Scoop out centres and set shells aside. Mash potato flesh with milk and soured cream. Mix in ham, spring onion and mustard powder. Spoon into reserved potato shells.
3 Sprinkle 15ml / 1tbls cheese on each potato half. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 9-10 minutes, or until the cheese melts and potatoes are heated through.

Ham boats for two: halve all the ingredients. Microwave potatoes for 5-7½ minutes at 100% (High). Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave filled potatoes for 4-5 minutes.

VARIATION
Add small amounts of chopped green pepper, celery or peas.





Left: *Tangy Ham Meatballs*
Right: *Crafty Ham Kebabs*

Tangy ham meatballs

10 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

450g / 1lb smoked ham, minced
225g / ½lb lean pork, minced
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
½ onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls French mustard
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper

SAUCE
50g / 2oz soft light brown sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
225ml / 8fl oz dry cider
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
50g / 2oz raisins

SERVES 4

1 Combine ham, pork, breadcrumbs, onion, mustard and egg. Season. Shape into 20 balls.
2 Arrange meatballs in a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in baking dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until firm, turning and rearranging meatballs halfway through cooking time. Stand 3-5 minutes.
3 Meanwhile make the sauce. Put sugar, cornflour and cinnamon into a tall jug. Mix in the cider, lemon juice and raisins. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the sauce is thickened. Stir well twice.
4 Pour sauce over meatballs. Serve hot with creamed potatoes. Try mustard sauce for a change.

VARIATION
To make mustard sauce: Melt 25g / 1oz butter, covered, for 45-50 seconds at 100% (High). Stir in 30ml / 2tbls plain flour, 275ml / ½pt milk and 15ml / 1tbls Dijon mustard. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until thickened; stir twice. Mix 30ml / 2tbls of hot mixture into a beaten egg yolk. Add to the sauce with 15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley and 1.5ml / ¼tsp wine vinegar. Microwave at 50% (Medium) 1 minute.

Crafty ham kebabs

7 mins

Standing time: none

1 large green pepper, seeded and cut into 16 pieces
450g / 1lb cooked ham, cut into 32 × 2.5cm / 1in cubes
150g / 5oz can pineapple chunks, drained with 50ml / 2fl oz juice reserved
2 large carrots, cut into 16 chunks
12 whole Maraschino cherries, rinsed and dried

GLAZE
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls honey
30ml / 2tbls soft light brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger

SERVES 3-4

1 Thread green pepper, ham,

pineapple, carrots and cherries on to 6-8 wooden skewers.
2 Combine reserved pineapple juice, lemon juice, honey, sugar and ginger in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until boiling.
3 Arrange kebabs in a row on a roasting rack or plate. Baste with half the glaze. Cover with grease-proof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until hot. Rotate rack or plate a quarter turn once; rearrange.
4 Serve with the remaining glaze.

Cook's notes

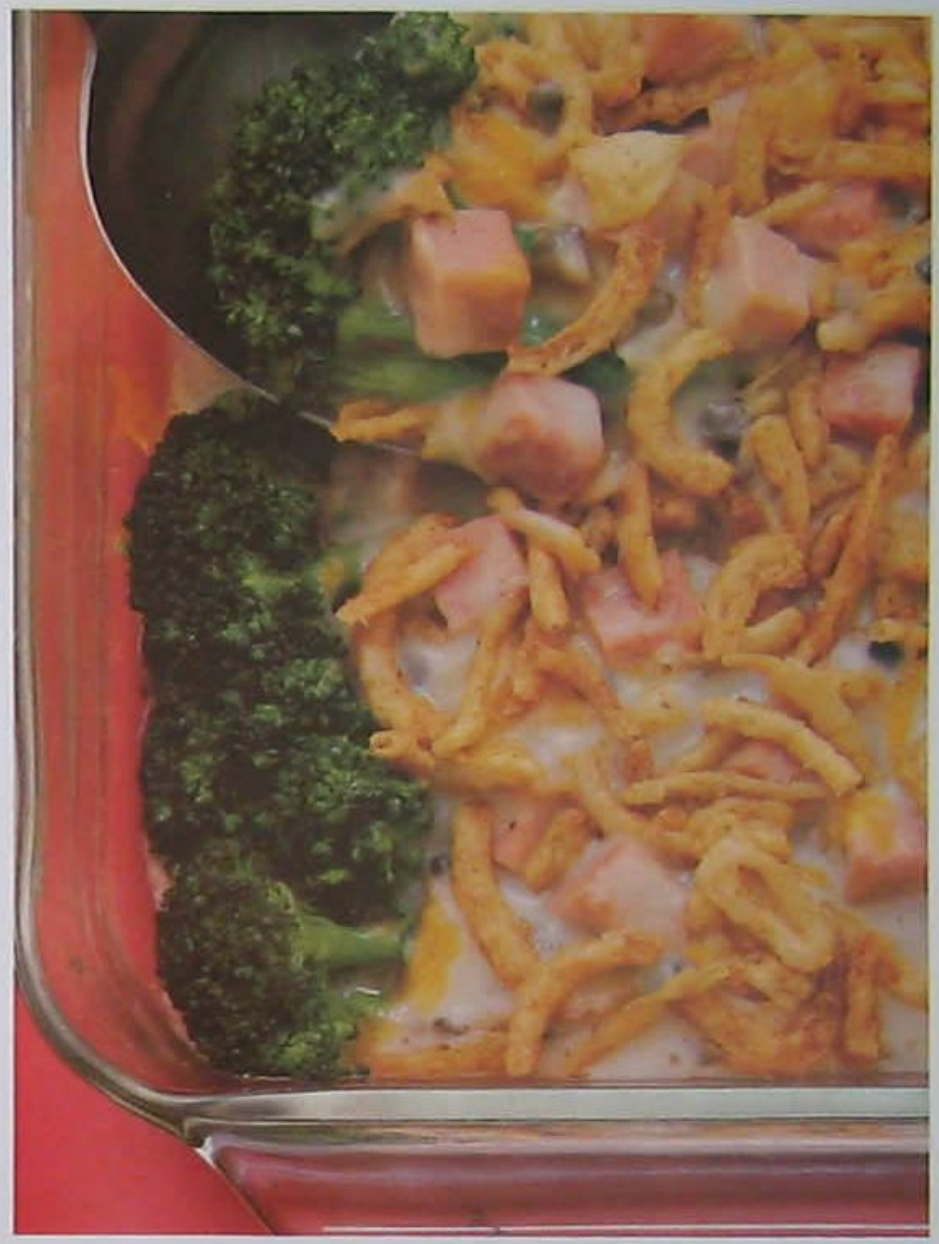
For a crunchy substitute for French fried onions, use croutons, chow mein noodles or corn chips.

Quick and crunchy ham

17 mins

Standing time: none

2 × 225g / 8oz packets frozen broccoli spears
350g / 12oz cooked ham, cubed
100g / 4oz red Leicester, or Cheddar cheese grated
425g / 15oz can cream of mushroom soup
79.4g / 2.8oz can French fried onions
SERVES 4

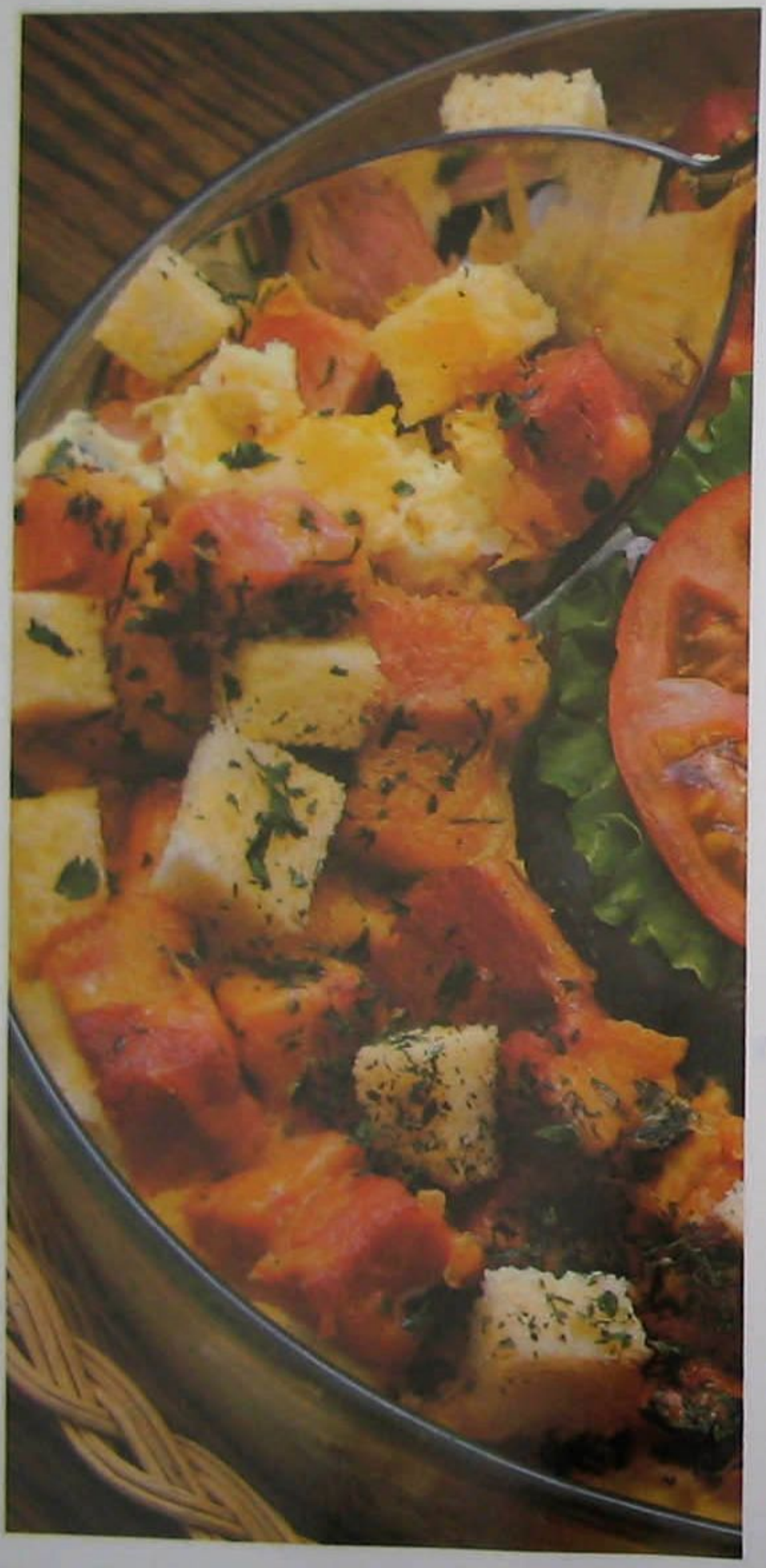


How to microwave Quick and crunchy ham

Put *both packets of broccoli into the microwave and cook at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Remove and separate spears. Drain the broccoli well. Arrange in a 25 × 20cm / 10 × 8in dish, alternating the heads and stems.*

Sprinkle *the cubed ham and grated cheese down the centre of the casserole. Pour the soup over and cover the dish loosely. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, turning the dish twice during cooking.*

Sprinkle *the French fried onions over the casserole when the broccoli is tender but still crisp. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until the onion rings are heated through but still crisp.*



Ham and cheese ring

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

6 slices of white bread, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1 small onion, finely chopped
350g / 12oz cooked ham, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
4 eggs
225ml / 8fl oz milk
2.5ml / ½tsp dried tarragon
salt and pepper
pinch of mustard powder
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Place most of the bread cubes in the bottom of a 20cm / 9in ring mould. Top with the onion, ham, cheese and remaining bread cubes.
2 Beat together the eggs, milk, tarragon, salt and pepper and mustard powder. Pour over the mixture in the ring mould and sprinkle with the parsley.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes, or until set. Stand for 5 minutes.

Apricot ham

6 mins

Standing time: none

275g / 10oz apricot jam
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp mustard powder
2.5ml / ½tsp ground allspice
450g / 1lb cooked boneless ham slices, 12mm / ½in thick

SERVES 6-8

1 Combine jam, sugar, mustard and allspice in a jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until jam melts; stir once.
2 Arrange ham slices in a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in dish. Pour over half the sauce and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes.
3 Turn ham slices over and pour over remaining sauce. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1½-2 minutes or until heated through.

Ham and Cheese Ring

Fast fish dishes

White fish has moved out of the nursery and into the dining room. Try these tasty, sophisticated fillets, cooked with various toppings, for instant main dishes from your microwave.

With their delicate flavour and texture, white fish fillets* are at their best cooked in the microwave, which retains all their succulence.

Use fish that is as fresh as possible — if it's really fresh it should have no unpleasant smell of ammonia. Frozen fish should be used immediately after it is thawed.

A few simple rules ensure that the fillets cook evenly. Place the thickest part of the fish to the outside of the dish and remove the fish from the microwave when it is just done — it can overcook very easily. Allow to stand for several minutes to finish cooking, then test: the flesh should be white and opaque and flake easily with a fork. If it is still solid or translucent, microwave it for a further 30 seconds to 1 minute and test.

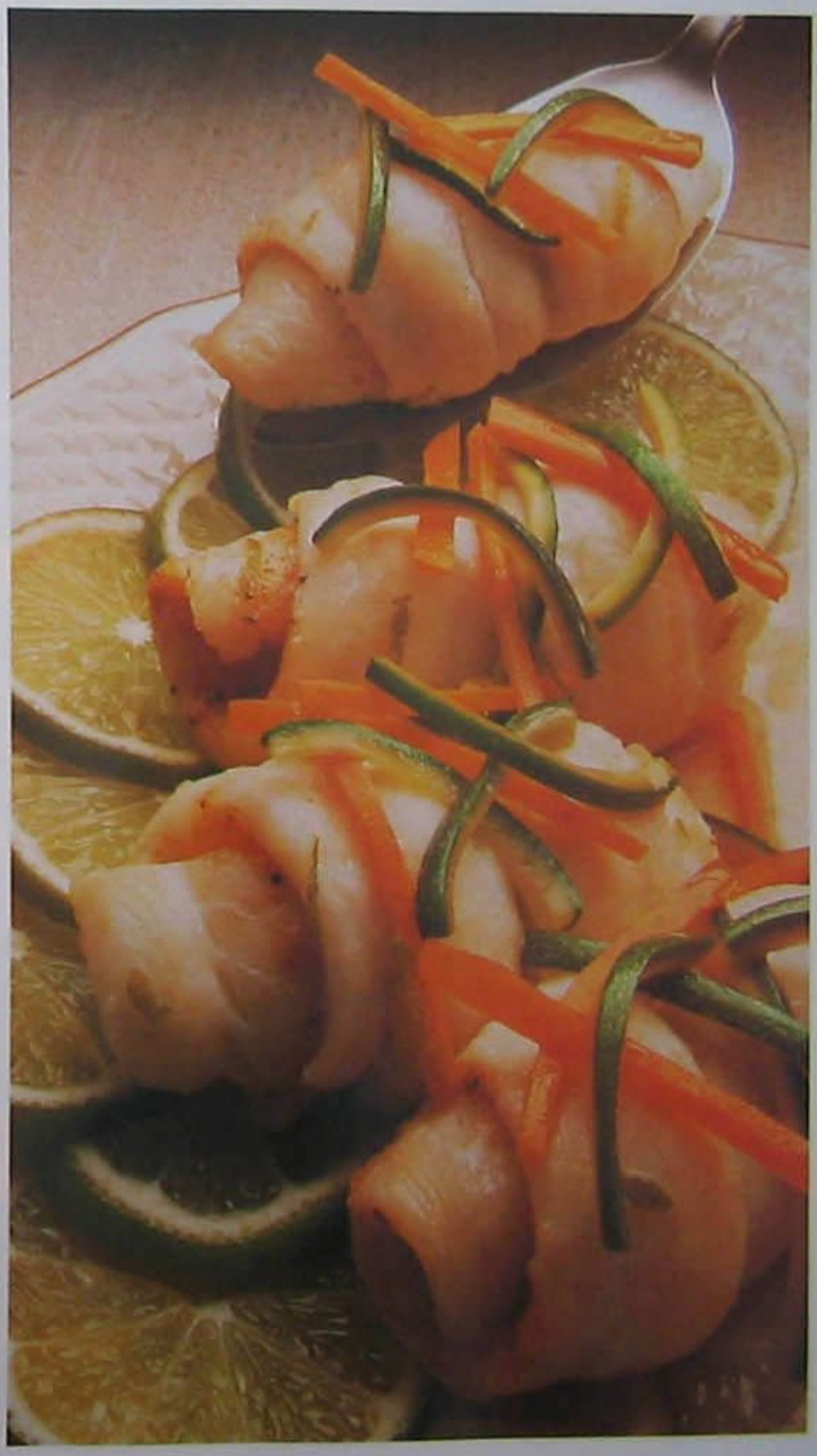
Fish should be covered both during cooking and standing — this helps retain moisture and cuts down any splattering; it also helps the fillets hold their heat during standing. Use a minimum of liquid — the fish will produce its own delicious natural juice during microwaving. A roasting rack is recommended in some of the recipes to keep the fish from poaching. When a rack is not used, the finished results are softer.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Gemfish, ling, flounder fillets.

Sole Julienne

Microtips

The term white fish applies to fish which contains little fat and includes cod, haddock, sole, plaice, whiting and halibut. When microwaving fish do not add salt before cooking as this dries and toughens the flesh. Use lemon juice instead.



Sole julienne

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 × 100g / 4oz lemon sole* fillets 6mm / ¼in thick, skinned
1.5ml / ¼tsp pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese
1 large carrot, cut into matchstick strips
1 small courgette, cut into matchstick strips
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated lime zest
15ml / 1tbls lime juice
50g / 2oz butter
2 limes, sliced, to serve (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Sprinkle one side of each fillet with the pepper, paprika and Parmesan cheese. Roll up each fillet with seasoning on the inside. Arrange in a 23cm / 9in shallow round dish, seam side down.
2 Combine carrot, courgette, lime zest, lime juice and butter in a small bowl. Mix well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until butter is melted and vegetables are slightly softened, stirring once.
3 Spoon vegetable mixture over

fish and cover with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with a fork.
4 Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Serve with new potatoes.

Sole julienne for two: Halve the ingredients. Microwave vegetables for 2 minutes and fish for 3-3½ minutes.

Cook's notes

Roll fillets from the wide end towards the tail end. Arrange fish on a shallow plate, seamside down. It may be necessary to tie the fillets with string or secure them with wooden cocktail sticks so they do not unroll while cooking.

Zippy fish fillets

6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb white fish fillets, 12mm / ½in thick, cut into four
1 lemon, cut into eight slices
½ small cucumber, seeded and cut into 5cm / 2in matchstick strips

DILL TOPPING
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
50ml / 2fl oz natural yoghurt
1.5ml / ¼tsp dillweed
pinch of grated lemon zest
dash of lemon juice
pinch of garlic powder

SERVES 4

1 Arrange fillets in a 23cm / 9in square dish with thickest portions to the outside. Top with lemon slices and cucumber.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with a fork, rotating dish once.
3 Stand, covered for 3 minutes.
4 Make topping. Combine cottage cheese, yoghurt, dillweed, lemon zest and juice and garlic in a blender. Purée until smooth.
5 Serve fish with dill topping and baby new potatoes.

Speedy sweet 'n' sour fish

9½ mins

Standing time: none

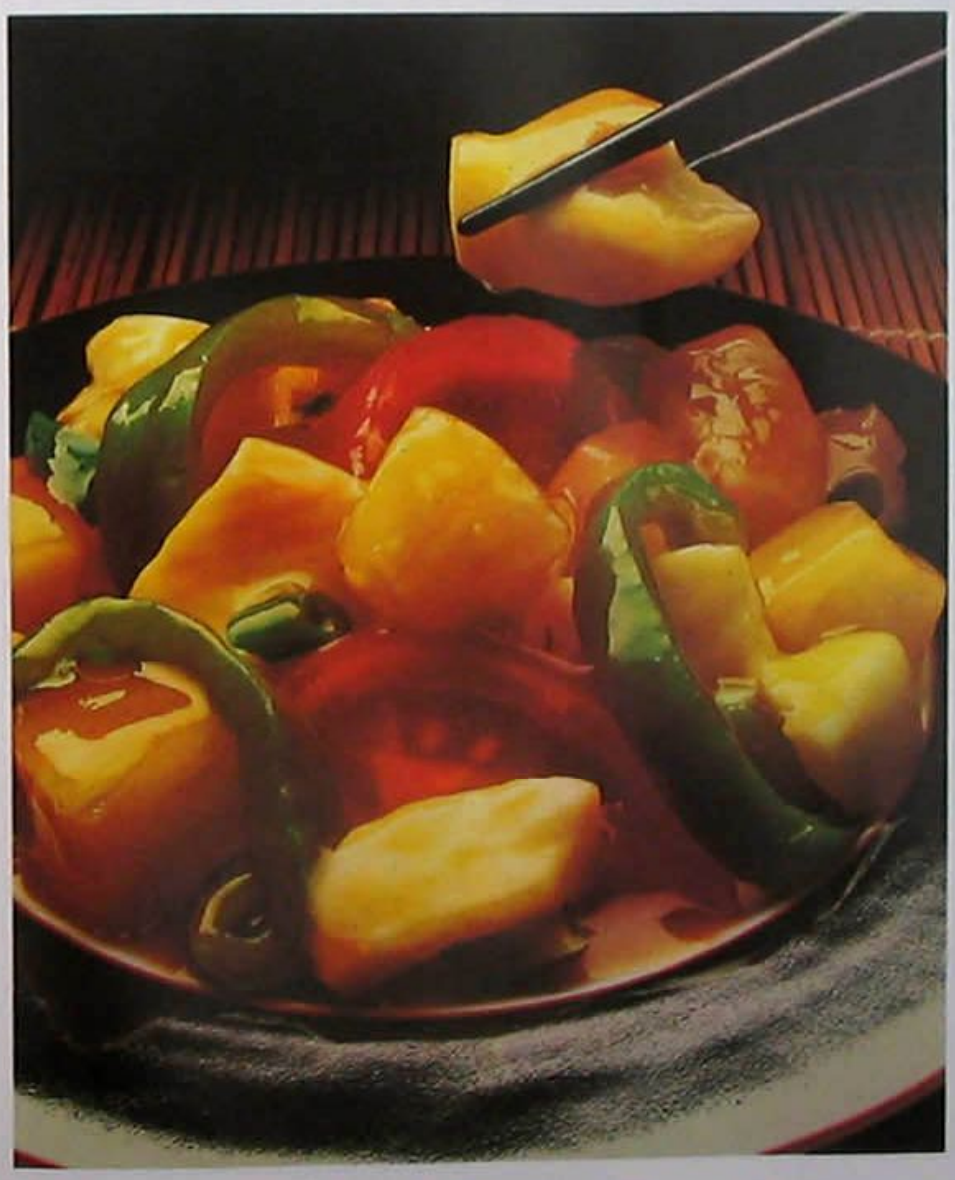
450g / 1lb white fish fillets, cut into 40mm / 1½in pieces
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
475g / 1lb 4oz pineapple chunks, in natural juice, drained with juice reserved
1 tomato, cut into eight wedges
1 spring onion, sliced

SAUCE
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
15ml / 1tbls honey
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
10ml / 2tsp cider vinegar
pinch of each garlic powder, ground ginger, pepper and turmeric

SERVES 4

1 Combine fish and green pepper in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until fish flakes with a fork, stirring gently once. Add pineapple and set aside.
2 Place 125ml / 4fl oz pineapple juice in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Stir in sauce ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until mixture thickens and bubbles, stirring 2 or 3 times.
3 Add tomato and onion to fish and green pepper. Blend in sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until heated through, stirring once.

Below: *Speedy Sweet 'n' Sour Fish*
Right: *Sunny Fish Fillets*



Sunny fish fillets

6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb white fish fillets, 12mm / ½in thick, cut into four serving size pieces
75ml / 3fl oz dry vermouth
2.5ml / ½tsp dried tarragon
½ orange, thinly sliced

SERVES 4

1 Arrange fillets in a 23cm / 9in square dish with thickest portions to the outside. Pour over the vermouth and sprinkle with tarragon. Place orange slices on top.
2 Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Rotate dish once.
3 Stand, covered, for 3 minutes.
4 Serve with plain boiled rice.

Sunny fish fillets for two: Halve the ingredients and microwave for 3-4 minutes. Stand 2 minutes.

Slimmer's notes

Sunny fish fillets are a tasty treat for slimmers. Each portion has only 110Cal / 460kJ.

Hot shot fish

6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb white fish fillets, 12mm / ½in thick, cut into four equal pieces

TOPPING

425g / 15oz can tomatoes, drained and roughly chopped
10ml / 2tsp chilli sauce, or to taste
15ml / 1tbls chopped onion
10ml / 2tsp red wine vinegar
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
pinch of dried thyme
pinch of cayenne

SERVES 4

1 Arrange fish fillets in a 23cm / 9in square dish with thickest portions to outside of dish.
2 Combine tomatoes, chilli sauce, onion, vinegar, mustard powder, thyme and cayenne. Mix well and spread over fillets.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Turn dish once during cooking.
4 Stand, covered, for 3 minutes.
5 Serve with peas and rice.

Freezer notes

To thaw white fish fillets: calculate the time at 3-5 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Microwave, covered at 50% (Medium) for half the calculated time, then separate and turn the fish. Microwave for the rest of the time, or until fish is pliable but still icy. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes, then pat dry with absorbent paper. Use immediately.

Fast fillets Florentine

14 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb white fish fillets, 12mm / ½in thick cut into four
pinch of paprika
pinch of pepper
275g / 10oz packet frozen chopped spinach
1 small carrot, grated
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
25g / 1oz long-grain rice, cooked
50g / 2oz water chestnuts.

SERVES 4

1 Arrange fillets on a roasting rack with the thickest portion to the outside. Sprinkle with paprika and pepper. Set aside.
2 Unwrap spinach and place on a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until thawed. Drain thoroughly, pressing to remove excess moisture. Set aside.
3 Combine carrot, butter, nutmeg and cinnamon in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until carrot is tender, stirring once. Add rice, chestnuts and spinach and mix well.
4 Place a quarter of the spinach mixture on each piece of fish. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7-9 minutes, or until fish flakes easily, rotating the rack twice.

Tomato-topped fish

8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb white fish fillets, 12mm / ½in thick, cut into four
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

TOPPING

1 large tomato, chopped
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil

Hot Shot Fish

1.5ml / ¼tsp onion powder
pinch of garlic powder
pinch of dried oregano
pinch of pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place tomato, ketchup, parsley, basil, onion, garlic, oregano and pepper in blender or food processor. Blend until smooth. Pour the purée into a 1.1L / 2pt bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until flavours are blended, stirring once.
2 Arrange fillets on a roasting rack (see Cook's notes, below) and spread with the tomato purée. Cover with greaseproof paper.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until fish flakes easily. Rotate rack once.
4 Stand, covered for 3 minutes.
5 Sprinkle each fillet with Parmesan cheese and serve with pasta.

Tomato topped fish for two: Halve the ingredients. Microwave tomato mixture for 1-2 minutes and fish for 4-5 minutes.

Tomato-topped Fish

Slimmer's notes

White fish is very low in calories. All the recipes here are great for slimmers. Sole Julienne has 200 Cal / 840kJ per portion; Sunny Fish Fillets have 110 Cal / 460 kJ; Tomato-topped Fish provides 125 Cal / 525 kJ, and Hot Shot Fish comes in at only 100 Cal / 420 kJ.

Cook's notes

When microwaving fish fillets on a roasting rack, arrange them so that the thickest portion of each fillet is toward the outside.

American frostings 2

Dress up a plain cake with a buttery microwaved frosting and it becomes a special treat — creamy golden, chocolatey, mallowly pink, crunchy with nuts or rich with rum — they are all tops for teatime.

The gentle melting ability of the microwave makes butter frostings and thickened fillings simple and mess-free. Melt and mix your frostings all in one bowl — there's less washing up when you use your microwave.

Although most of these recipes are for frostings, there is one included for a filling. This thick, lemony custard mixture is ideal for sandwiching layers of cake together, it can also be used as a base for fruit in a sponge flan case. The quantity given will make a generous filling for a large cake.

Left: *Buttercream Frosting*
Right: *Chocolate Peanut Frosting*

Buttercream frosting

2 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls cream or milk
pinch of salt
250g / 9oz icing sugar, sifted
2.5ml / ½tsp rum flavouring

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place the butter or margarine, cream or milk and salt in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the mixture is bubbling.
2 Gradually beat in the icing sugar and rum until smoothly blended and of a spreading consistency, adding a few drops of extra milk if necessary. Cool before using, spread over cake.

Vanilla frosting

2 mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls milk
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
450g / 1lb icing sugar, sifted
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Combine the butter, milk and brown sugar in a 575ml / 1pt bowl.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, uncovered, until boiling. Stir once during cooking.
3 Add the icing sugar and flavouring. Beat the mixture until smooth, adding a few more drops of milk if necessary.

VARIATIONS
This frosting can be varied in countless ways. To ring the changes stir in to basic mixture: 50g / 2oz of chocolate chips, chopped pecans or walnuts, or stoned, chopped dates.

Chocolate peanut frosting

3 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz plain chocolate, broken in small pieces
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls milk
30ml / 2tbls smooth peanut butter
250g / 9oz icing sugar, sifted

MAKES 1 BISCUIT QUANTITY

1 Place the broken chocolate, butter, milk and peanut butter in an 850ml / 1½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes, or until the chocolate has melted, stirring twice.
2 Beat in the icing sugar. Leave to stand for 5 minutes before using, as the chocolate and peanut butter tend to hold the heat.

VARIATION
Mix 50g / 2oz crunchy peanut butter into the frosting.

Marshmallow Frosting

Marshmallow frosting

1 min

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz pink marshmallows
30ml / 2tbls strawberry jam
275ml / ½pt double cream

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Snip the marshmallows into pieces. Put them in an 850ml / 1½pt bowl with 30ml / 2tbls of the cream and microwave, covered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 1 minute, until melted. Stir in the strawberry jam and leave the mixture to cool.
2 Whip the cream until thick. Fold it into the marshmallow and chill thoroughly.

VARIATION
Use white marshmallows and mix in 2tbls apricot jam with a few drops of lemon juice.

Cook's notes

The easiest way to cut marshmallows is to use a pair of kitchen scissors to snip them into quarters. Dip the blades of the scissors in warm water from time to time to prevent them from sticking.

Butter nut frosting

2½ mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls pecans or walnuts, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls single cream or milk
250g / 9oz icing sugar, sifted
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place butter in bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds.
2 Stir in the nuts and microwave at 100% (High), covered, for 2-4 minutes, or until the nuts are just brown, stirring once.
3 Stir in the cream or milk, icing sugar and vanilla. Beat until blended and of a spreading consistency. Add a few drops more milk if needed to make the mixture easier to spread.

VARIATION
Add 50g / 2oz chopped dates.

Golden butter frosting

3 mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter
250g / 9oz icing sugar, sifted
30ml / 2tbls single cream or milk
1.5ml / ¼tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place the butter in bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until golden brown. Do not let it burn (see Microtips).
2 Stir in the icing sugar, cream or milk and vanilla, adding extra milk if necessary to make a spreading consistency.

Microtips

Do not leave the butter unattended while browning it. Fat attracts microwave energy and should be watched constantly.

Buttercream rum frosting

2 mins

Standing time: none

This frosting is particularly attractive if chocolate is drizzled over the top of it.

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls single cream
pinch of salt
250g / 9oz icing sugar, sifted
2.5ml / ½tsp rum flavouring

MAKES 1 BASIC QUANTITY

1 Place the butter, cream and salt in a 850ml / 1½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the mixture is bubbling.
2 Stir in the icing sugar and rum flavouring. Milk can be added to thin the mixture to a spreading consistency.

Left: *Butter Nut Frosting*
Centre: *Golden Butter Frosting*
Right: *Buttercream Rum Frosting*

How much frosting do you need?

Each recipe *here makes enough to top two 23cm / 9in round cakes, or two 20cm / 8in square cakes, or 20 small cakes or a 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8 in cake.*

Double *the quantity of ingredients if you wish to frost and fill the large round or square cakes, the rectangular one, or to top up to 36 small cakes.*

Halve *the quantities given in the recipes if you only need to cover one round or square cake, or to ice the tops of 15 small cakes or buns.*

Freezer notes

Freeze cakes without their frostings or icing. Not only does this prevent damage, but the cakes look fresher if they are newly iced. Condensation due to thawing tends to spoil the finished appearance. Freeze the frostings separately but remember to label them clearly. Thaw, either at room temperature or at 30% (Low) in the microwave cooker. Beat frosting before use.

Lemon filling

4 mins

Standing time: none

Lemon filling makes a delicious base for sponge flan. Use in individual cases or a large one and top with fresh cream.

65g / 2½oz sugar
22.5ml / 4½tsp cornflour
200ml / 7fl oz water
1 egg yolk, beaten
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
10ml / 2tsp grated lemon zest
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice

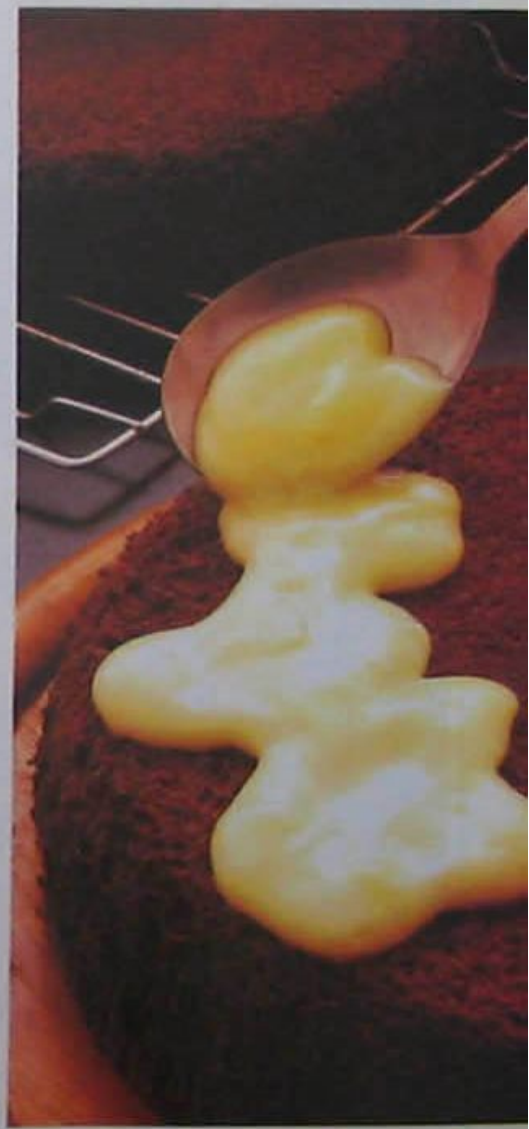
MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Mix the sugar and cornflour. Gradually blend in the water, stirring until smooth.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until very thick. Stir after 2 minutes, then every minute.
3 Add a little of the hot mixture to the egg yolk, beating well. Return to the rest of the hot mixture and blend thoroughly.
4 Microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute, until smooth and thick. Beat in the butter or margarine, the lemon zest and juice.
5 Cover the surface closely with stretch wrap and leave to cool completely before using for filling.

Cook's notes

Although is is possible to use butter or margarine in most of the recipes, butter is best if no other strong flavourings are to be added.

Add different flavours and colours to Buttercream Frosting. It can be made in advance and frozen for up to 3 months. It is a versatile frosting which can be piped through shaped piping tubes, to make many attractive decorations and patterns or used to top or fill cakes.



Microwaving beetroot

Once you have tried microwaving fresh beetroots, you will never want to cook them any other way! So quick, clean and easy, fresh or cooked beetroots taste and look fabulous in any microwave recipe.

Beetroot makes a refreshing change from the usual salad and vegetable accompaniments — particularly when microwaved. Cooking times are drastically reduced and the end result looks as invitingly fresh, bright and tender as it tastes.

Available all year round, beetroot is sold both ready-cooked and raw. The smaller variety tends to be sweeter and more tender (see How to select and store beetroot, page 1537). Pickled beetroots are also available, in packets or jars; they have been cooked, peeled and soaked in vinegar, either whole, sliced or grated. Pickled beetroots have a strong flavour and should be used as a salad ingredient, and not substituted in recipes.

Preparing and cooking fresh beetroot

Beetroot is cooked in its skin, with root and stem ends attached, to prevent bleeding (releasing its juices and colour) during cooking. To prepare, wash carefully under cold running water and trim the ends slightly. Adding a spoonful of vinegar to the cooking water helps to preserve the vibrant colour. Turn carefully during cooking to prevent breaking the skins. Beetroots are easiest to peel when still warm.

Chunky Beetroot Soup

ANDREW WHEETLEY

Chunky beetroot soup

24 mins

Standing time: none

2 carrots, thinly sliced
1 large onion, thinly sliced
1 potato, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
150g / 5oz cabbage, shredded
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 bay leaf
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried marjoram
575ml / 1pt water
225g / ½lb cooked beetroots, cut into matchsticks
285g / 10½oz can beef broth
salt and pepper
soured cream, to serve

SERVES 4-6

1 In a 3.4L / 6pt casserole, combine the carrots, onion, potato, cabbage, garlic, bay leaf, and marjoram. Add 125ml / 4fl oz of the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-13 minutes, or until tender; stir twice.
2 Add the beetroots, remaining water and beef broth. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, or until the beetroots are tender, stirring twice.
3 Remove the bay leaf and season to taste. Ladle into bowls, topping each serving with a spoonful of soured cream, if liked.

Microwave times for beetroots

TYPE	AMOUNT	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Fresh beetroots (whole)	225g / ½lb 450g / 1lb	13-15 mins 16-18 mins
Canned or pickled beetroots (sliced, diced, grated)	450g / 1lb	2-3 mins

How to prepare and microwave fresh beetroot

Wash *the beetroots gently, taking care not to break the skin. Leave 2.5cm / 1-2in tops and roots attached to prevent bleeding.*

Place *the beetroots in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Pour 75ml / 5tbls hot water on to 450g / 1lb beetroots and 45ml / 3tbls on to 225g / ½lb.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) as directed in chart, above, or until fork tender, turning over and rotating the dish a quarter turn twice.*

Let stand, *covered, for 3-5 minutes, or until beetroots are cool enough to handle, then drain. Slip off skins and tops, then trim root ends if liked.*

Serve *beetroots whole, quartered or sliced. Return to casserole with 15g / ½oz butter, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes to heat.*

Sprinkle *the heated beetroots with a few drops of lemon juice, orange juice or cider vinegar to bring out their flavour, if liked.*

Saucy beetroots

17¾ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb beetroots
75ml / 5tbls hot water
75g / 3oz full-fat soft cheese*
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
7.5ml / 1½tsp sugar
large pinch of grated nutmeg

SERVES 4

1 Wash the beetroots and place in a casserole with the water, microwave as directed in steps 1-4 on page 1535, reserving 30ml / 2tbls cooking liquid. Slice beetroots.
2 Combine the beetroot and reserved liquid in the casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, or until heated, stirring once. Set aside.
3 Place the soft cheese in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, or until soft. Blend in vinegar and sugar.
4 Top each serving with beetroot with a spoonful of the cheese mixture; sprinkle with nutmeg.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Cream cheese.

Cook's notes

Beetroot leaves are edible, provided they are in good condition — fresh and green. Rinse in cold water, then chop and add to soups and casseroles for a spinach-like flavour.

Orange beets

19½ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

For a stronger orange flavour, grate 5ml / 1tsp orange zest into the sauce.

450g / 1lb beetroots
75ml / 5tbls water
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
pinch of ground cloves
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls cider vinegar
15ml / 1tbls orange juice

SERVES 6

1 Wash the beetroots carefully without breaking the skins and place in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole with the water. Microwave as directed in steps 1-4 on page 1535, reserving 125ml / 4fl oz cooking liquid. Set aside.
2 Combine the cornflour, cloves, salt and pepper in a jug. Blend in the vinegar, reserved beetroot, cooking liquid and orange juice.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until clear and thickened, stirring twice.
4 Slice the beetroots and add the sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the beetroot is thoroughly heated through. Serve hot, or cold as a salad dish.

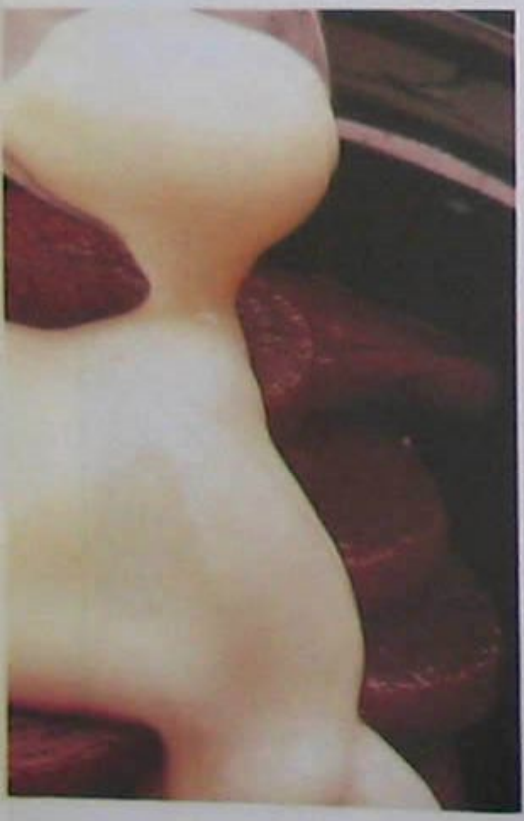
Microtips

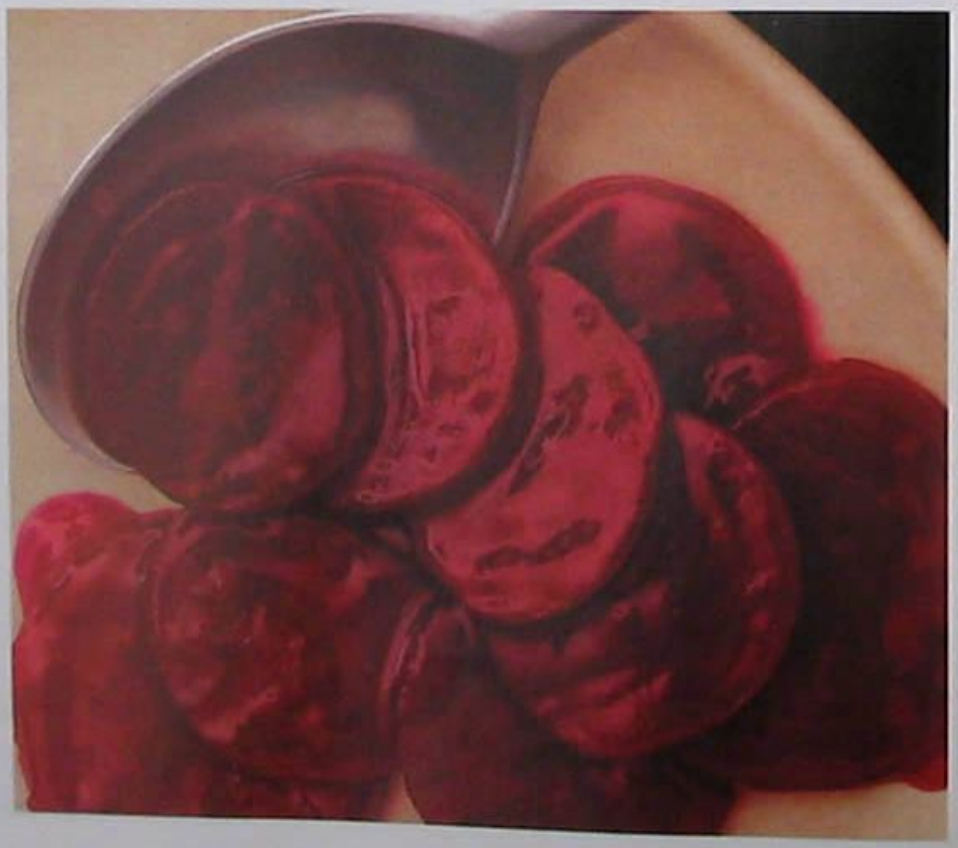
Do not add salt to fresh beetroots before microwaving as this tends to drain out much of the deep red colour. Season just before serving.

Slimmer's notes

Beetroots make a tangy side dish served with a sprinkling of lemon juice or vinegar. This gives just 45Cal / 190kJ per 100g / 4oz.

Below left: *Saucy Beetroots*
Below: *Orange Beets*





ANDREW WHITTUCK

Russian salad

8 mins

Standing time: none

Assemble this salad only just before eating, otherwise, the beetroot juices will run and spoil the appearance of the salad.

450g / 1lb cooked baby beetroots
2 potatoes, diced
60ml / 4tbls water
1 small cauliflower
4 green olives, sliced, to serve

DRESSING
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise
60ml / 4tbls soured cream
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives

SERVES 4-6

1 Slice two-thirds of the beetroots and reserve in a bowl; dice the remaining beetroots and set aside.

Russian Salad

2 Place the potatoes in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole together with half the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5½ minutes. Rinse in cold water, then plunge in cold water to stop cooking and cool; drain and set aside.

3 Place the cauliflower in the casserole with the remaining water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes. Rinse, plunge in cold water; drain.

4 Combine the dressing ingredients in a bowl, mixing well. Divide in half and toss the potato cubes in one half.

5 Arrange the vegetables on a 23cm / 9in plate; place the cauliflower around the outside, then the beetroot slices and the potatoes in the centre. Top the potatoes with the diced beetroot. Garnish with sliced olives and serve with the remaining dressing.

How to select and store beetroot

Fresh beetroot *should be firm and smooth; it keeps well in the refrigerator up to 1 week. Cooked beetroots are sold in their skins; store, unskinned, up to 4 days in the refrigerator.*

Stuffed roast lamb

Lamb is an excellent choice for the microwave. It is naturally tender and responds well to quick cooking. A variety of stuffings add flavour and texture to this succulent meat.

Young lamb has pink flesh with white fat and the sweetest taste. Make it go further with a stuffing to complement its flavour.

Boned shoulders and legs are the easiest joints to carve and their compact, regular shape helps them to microwave evenly. Breast, rack and loin are also suitable joints for stuffing.

Microwaving stuffed lamb: Trim fat to a uniform thickness. This helps the meat to cook evenly. Set the cooked meat on a microwave roasting rack to cook.

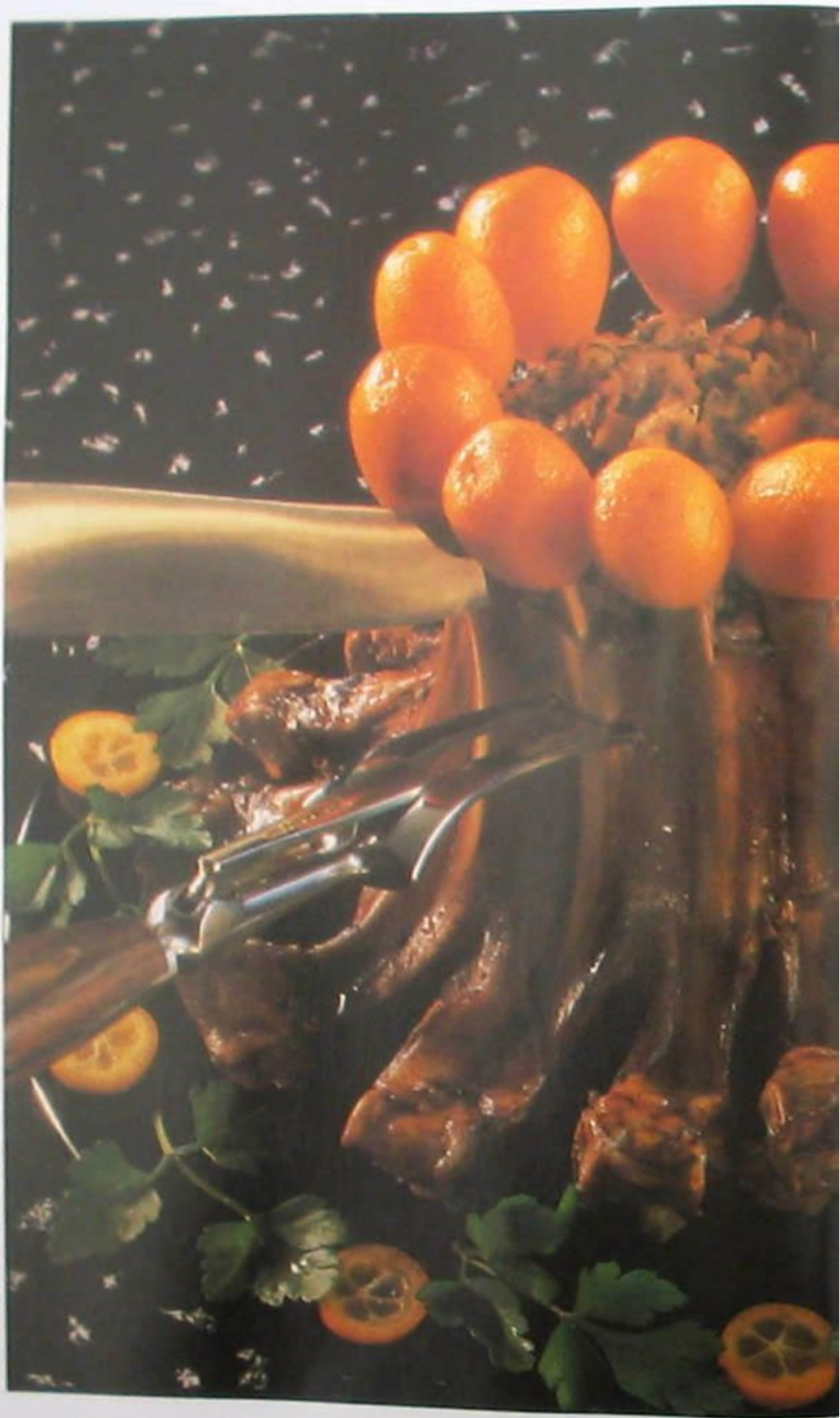
To calculate the microwaving time, use the combined weight of the joint and stuffing. But remember that the fat content of the meat can affect the cooking time so any time that is calculated is only a guide.

Testing for doneness: A microwave thermometer is the most accurate way of ensuring that the meat is done. Make sure to insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the flesh and not into the fat or stuffing which would give an inaccurate reading. You can also test for doneness by piercing the flesh with a skewer or a knife. The juice should be clear, not red or too pink, although lamb is at its best when the meat is slightly pink and underdone.

Allow the meat to stand for at least 10 minutes, covered in foil with the shiny side in. This is an important part of the cooking time. The meat may be underdone if it is not allowed to stand.

Choosing stuffings: The rich taste of lamb goes well with many fruits, spices and herbs. Tangy citrus fruits are especially nice, as are apricots, apples, sultanas and raisins. Basil and garlic are also good.

When stuffing the lamb, be careful not to fill the joint too much and allow some space for the stuffing to swell as it cooks.



ANDREW WILLIAMS

Microtips

Drain juices from lamb halfway through cooking time — they attract microwave power away from the meat. Reserve the juice for gravy.

Crown roast with kumquats

31 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

Because joints vary so much, cooking times are only a guide. Test for doneness at the end of the calculated time and microwave for a minute or two more if necessary.

1-1.1kg / 2-2½lb crown roast of lamb
12 kumquats, or one per rib
parsley or watercress to garnish

STUFFING
100g / 4oz lean lamb, minced
100g / 4oz onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
37.5ml / 2½tbls long-grain rice, cooked
30ml / 2tbls sultanas
15-25g / ½-1oz walnuts, chopped
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried rosemary
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
½ egg, beaten
2 kumquats, pipped and chopped

GRAVY
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
15ml / 1tbls orange marmalade
60ml / 4tbls white wine (optional)
425ml / ¾pt light stock

SERVES 6

1 Place the minced lamb in a bowl and microwave for 2 minutes at 100% (High). Drain and reserve juice. Place onion and butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes or until onion is soft. Stir in lamb, rice, sultanas, walnuts, rosemary, parsley, egg and chopped kumquats.
2 Stand crown upside down on a plate, resting on the bones. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes; reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 8 minutes. Turn once.
3 Drain and add juice to other reserved juices. Turn roast right way up and fill centre with stuffing. Pack it well down mounding it in the middle. Cover stuffing with stretch wrap.
4 Cut a slit in each whole kumquat and press one on each bone end. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until stuffing is hot and meat cooked. Test by piercing flesh with a skewer and checking juices — they should run clear.
5 Cover roast loosely with foil and stand for 5-10 minutes.
6 Make the gravy. Blend flour, marmalade and meat juices in a 850ml / 1½pt jug. Make up to 425ml / ¾pt with wine and stock. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until boiling; stir well twice during cooking.
7 Garnish crown with parsley or watercress and serve with gravy. An aubergine casserole makes an unusual accompaniment.

VARIATION
If kumquats are unavailable, use 2 oranges, each cut into eight wedges. Use two wedges in the stuffing and the rest to garnish the base of the crown. Finish the crown bones with paper cutlet frills.

How to serve Crown roast of lamb

Transfer *the crown roast to a serving plate using a fish slice to support the stuffing in the centre.*

Carve *the roast down between each of the chops and serve some stuffing with each chop.*

Spicy Eastern stuffed lamb

76½ mins

Standing time: 10-15 mins

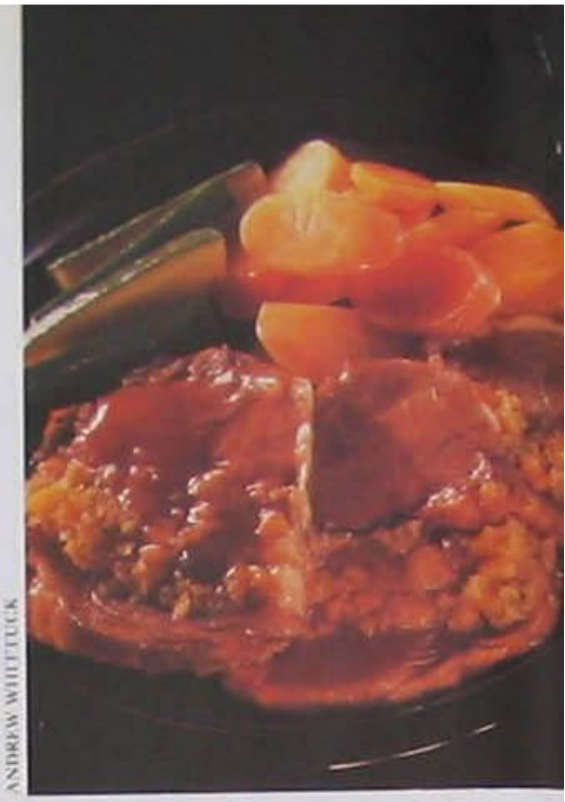
1.6kg / 3½lb shoulder of lamb, boned (weight after boning)
1 garlic clove, cut into slivers

STUFFING
50g / 2oz onion, finely chopped
50g / 2oz bulghur (cracked wheat)
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
150ml / ¼pt boiling stock
1 garlic clove, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp cumin seeds
50g / 2oz dried apricots, chopped
50g / 2oz pine nuts or unsalted cashew nuts, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
37.5ml / 2½tbls raisins
90ml / 6tbls brown breadcrumbs
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
½ egg, beaten

SPICED SAUCE (see Cook's notes)
15g / ½oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp each ground cumin, allspice and coriander
5ml / 1tsp tomato purée or paste
425ml / ¾pt light stock

SERVES 6

Make the stuffing: Microwave onion, bulghur and butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in stock, cover and set aside for 5 minutes, or until stock is absorbed. Stir in remaining stuffing ingredients.



ANDREW WHEETMAN

Spicy Eastern Stuffed Lamb

How to microwave Spicy Eastern stuffed lamb

Stuff *boned cavity of lamb. Allow space for stuffing to expand. Neatly tie joint with string into an even shape, tucking meat around the stuffing to completely enclose it.*

Cut *a trellis pattern in the top of the joint; insert garlic slivers. Weigh stuffed joint and calculate cooking time, allowing 16 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Divide time in half.*

Place *joint, trellis side down, on a roasting rack or upturned plate in a large, shallow dish. Insert a microwave thermometer into the meat at the centre of the joint.*

Cook *at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then at 50% (Medium) for remaining part of first half of time. Turn joint over and cook for remaining time. Test for doneness.*

Cover *cooked joint loosely with foil, and leave to stand for 10-15 minutes, or until internal temperature is 80-84°C / 175-183°F. Serve with Spiced Sauce (see Cook's notes).*

Cook's notes

To make the Spiced Sauce, place butter in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir in flour, cumin, allspice, coriander and tomato purée. Make cooking juices up to 425ml / ¾pt with stock and blend in. Pour into gravy boat, cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until bubbling, stirring once. Serve lamb with Spiced Sauce, brown rice, courgettes and, if you like, aubergine.

over stuffing. Tie with string. Weigh and calculate cooking time; allow 17 minutes per 450g / 1lb.

4 Place lamb on a roasting rack or upturned plate in a large dish. Insert microwave thermometer, if using. Cover with absorbent paper.

5 Microwave for half calculated time at 100% (High) for first 5 minutes, then at 50% (Medium) for remaining half of time. Turn over and microwave at 50% (Medium) for rest of cooking time, or until thermometer reads 72°C / 160°F. Tent with foil. Stand for 10-15 minutes.

6 Make sauce: blend cornflour into pan juices. Mix in stock, apple, mint and vinegar. Pour into a jug; microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, until boiling; stir once.

7 Serve lamb with sauce.

French-style Stuffed Lamb

French-style stuffed lamb

83¾ mins

Standing time: 10-15 mins

1.6kg / 3½lb boned leg of lamb (weight after boning)
100g / 4oz cooking apple, peeled, cored and chopped
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
75ml / 5tbls water
4 spring onions, finely chopped
100g / 4oz fresh or frozen peas
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz brown breadcrumbs
100g / 4oz ham, minced
salt and pepper

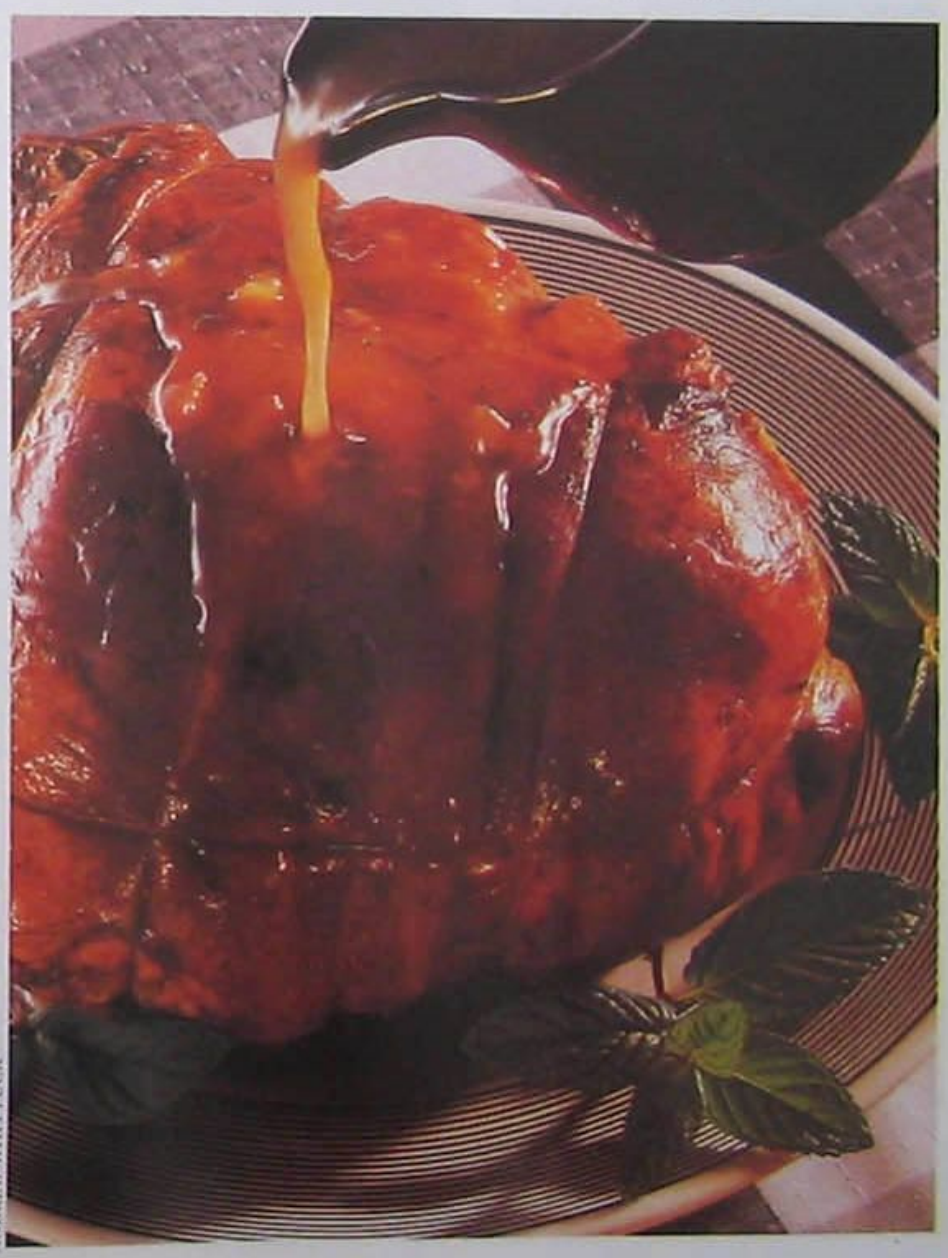
SAUCE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt stock
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mint
5ml / 1tsp wine vinegar

SERVES 6-8

1 Place apple, sugar and 30ml / 2tbls water in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes; stir once. Mash apple to purée; set aside.

2 Combine onions, peas, butter and 45ml / 3tbls water in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, until peas are soft; stir once. Drain and wash. Mix in breadcrumbs, ham and half apple. Season; set aside.

3 Stuff lamb, folding flap of skin



ANDREW WHITTUCK

Noisettes au beurre

19½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb boned loin of lamb
Lemony Garlic Butter to serve (see Cook's notes)

STUFFING
50g / 2oz onion, finely chopped
75g / 3oz mushrooms, chopped
45g / 1½oz butter or margarine
butter for spreading
grated zest of ½ lemon
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
45g / 1½oz brown breadcrumbs
½ egg, beaten

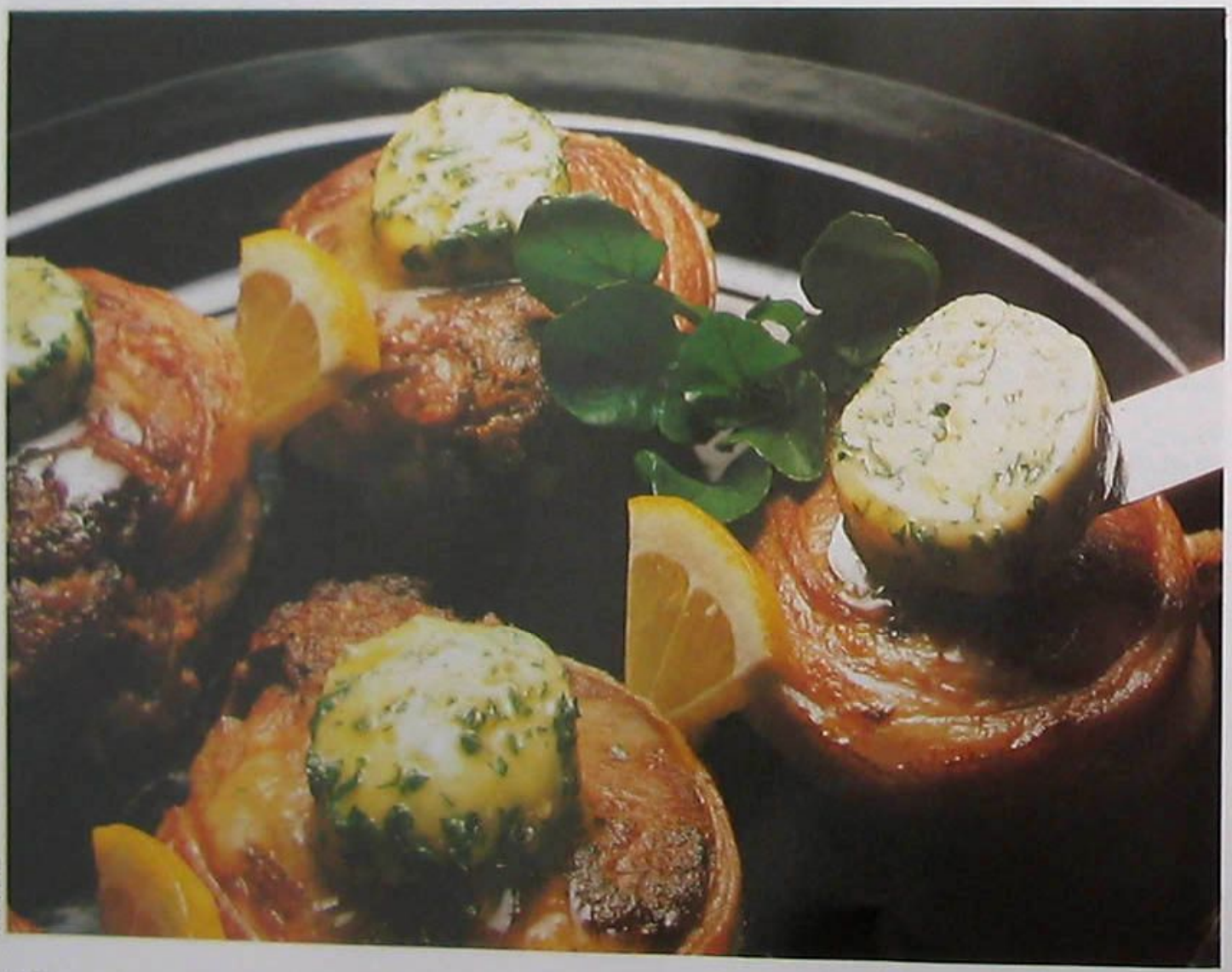
GRAVY
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
425ml / ¾pt light stock
60ml / 4tbls white wine (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Combine onion, mushrooms and 15g / ½oz butter in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in lemon zest, basil and breadcrumbs. Add just enough egg to bind.
2 Shape stuffing into a sausage. Lay lamb, fat side down and arrange stuffing lengthways down the centre. Roll up firmly; tie securely in shape with eight pieces of string tied at regular intervals.
3 Using a sharp knife, slice between the pieces of string to make eight even-sized noisettes. Lightly spread each with butter.
4 Pre-heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions. Place noisettes in browning dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Turn over and rotate each a half turn.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes or until cooked. Drain cooking juices into a jug. Cover with foil; stand 5 minutes.
6 Place remaining measured butter in a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, or until melted. Stir in flour. Make up the cooking juices to 425ml / ¾pt with stock and wine and blend into flour and butter mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, stirring twice.
7 Top with a pat of Lemony Garlic Butter and serve with gravy.

Cook's notes

For Lemony Garlic Butter, beat the finely grated zest of ½ a lemon, 30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley and 1 crushed clove of garlic into 75g / 3oz softened butter. Flavour to taste with lemon juice and pepper. Form into a sausage, wrap and chill for 1-2 hours until firm. Slice into pats.



Microwave plus whisk

The whisk is the perfect partner to the microwave — with it you can whip up an airy soufflé, fluffy mousse or feather-light sponge — all ready to eat in minutes.

The whisk is one of the simplest pieces of kitchen equipment and one of the most effective. Use it to incorporate lightness and volume into mousses, soufflés, cakes and sauces. As it's suited to the round containers without edges used in microwaving, a whisk can effectively take on many of the stirring chores as well, making it ideal for microwaved sauces — one of the reasons for their success.

Every cook should have at least one whisk — experienced cooks often have a choice of types, to cope with different jobs. These are some of the most popular and useful types of whisk:

Balloon whisk: this is the professional cooks choice for whisking egg whites; it gives consistently good results but is also hard work — it can take 5 minutes to whisk egg whites to the stiff peak stage. Balloon whisks come in several sizes and weights, depending on number and thickness of wires.

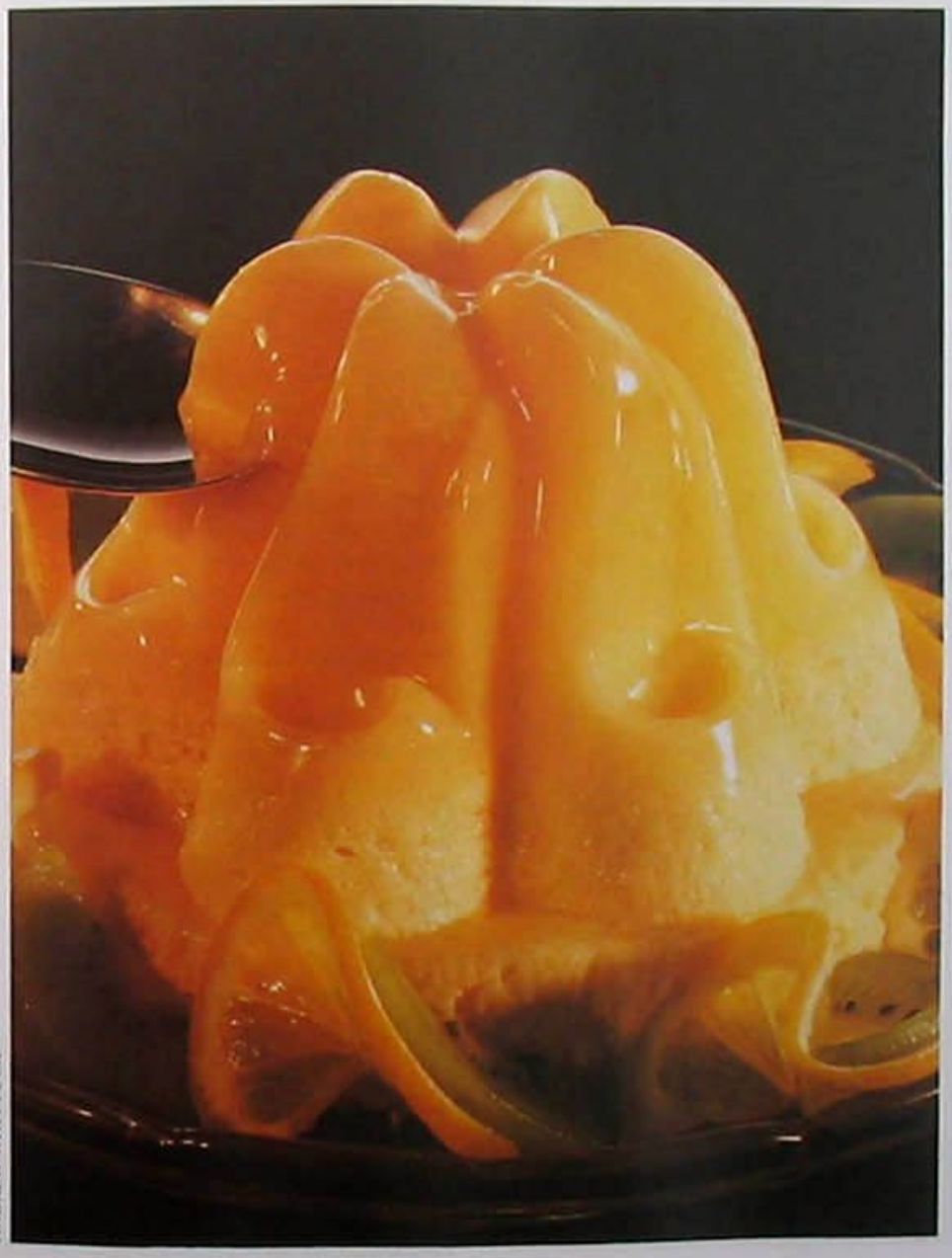
Sauce whisk: this resembles a balloon whisk but is longer and the wire loops are rigid, not flexible. Sauce whisks come in several sizes; the smallest can also be used for whipping small quantities of cream. Sauce whisks are very good at getting rid of lumps and give butter-based sauces a satiny sheen.

Rotary whisk: this has two beaters which are turned by a crank handle. Although both hands are needed to operate this type of whisk, rotary whisks are versatile and can be used for many whisking jobs, including egg whites, batters and half-frozen sorbets and ice creams. Because they are quite hard work, they are best used for relatively small quantities. The results may not be quite so light and airy as with other types.

Hand-held electric mixer: This portable whisk is easy to operate and labour-saving, although the more powerful models can be quite heavy to hold. It is very versatile and can be used for numerous everyday jobs, including creaming fat and sugar for cakes, whisking sugar and eggs for sponges and mixing batters, as well as making meringues, butter icings and frostings.

Table mixer: this is the most labour saving of all — it is also the largest and most expensive. Table top mixers come with their own bowl and are very powerful. They cope effortlessly with large quantities, so are useful if you cook for a family or regularly cater for large numbers.

They are excellent for many cake and pudding mixtures, but slightly less successful when it comes to whisking egg whites.



ANDREW WHITTUCK

Honeycomb Mould

Guidelines for successful whisking

- When whisking egg whites, make sure both bowl and whisk are spotlessly clean, dry and grease-free. Egg whites should be at room temperature and no speck of egg yolk included.
- For best results, whisk slowly at first, then increase speed as the foam begins to peak.
- When whisking cream, chill the bowl first and make sure the cream is well chilled too. Reduce the speed of whisking as soon as the cream starts to thicken to the stage wanted — this helps avoid over beating.
- A rigid whisk is best for beating half-frozen ice creams and sorbets. Choose either a sauce or rotary whisk or an electric mixer.
- Whisk sauces frequently and vigorously — this eliminates lumps and gives a satiny sheen.
- For best results, the bowl must be large enough to allow ingredients to expand during whisking and enable the whisk to work effectively. If using a balloon whisk, choose a bowl with curved sides; use a sauce whisk with straighter sides.

Blue cheese mousse

23½ mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

A delicious first course, serve the mousse on crisp crackers.

60ml / 12tsp cornflour
225ml / 8fl oz milk
50ml / 2fl oz single cream
1 large egg, separated
1 large egg yolk
100g / 4oz Danish blue cheese, mashed
30ml / 2tbls snipped fresh chives or 15ml / 1tbls dried
salt and pepper
watercress and cucumber slices, to garnish

SERVES 4-5

1 In a large bowl, blend the cornflour with 30ml / 2tbls of the milk.
2 Combine the remaining milk with the cream in a large jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until hot. Gradually whisk into the cornflour mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until thickened and smooth, whisking twice during microwaving.
3 Cool for a few minutes, then beat in the egg yolks, cheese, chives and seasoning.
4 Whisk the egg white until it forms soft peaks, then fold into the cheese mixture.
5 Lightly grease a 450g / 1lb loaf dish. Add the mousse mixture and smooth the top. Stand in a larger dish. Pour in enough hot water to come halfway up the sides of the loaf dish.
6 Microwave, uncovered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 20-25 minutes, or until the top of the mousse is well set in the centre, turning the dish several times. Remove the loaf dish from the water and stand for 5-10 minutes, then turn out on to a platter.
7 Garnish, and serve while still warm. If wished, wrap in stretch wrap immediately after unmoulding and leave until cold before serving.

Left: *Blue Cheese Mousse*
Right: *Hot Fruit Meringue*

Hot fruit meringue

9 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb cherries, stoned
225g / 8oz blackcurrants
30ml / 2tbls sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp mixed spice
15ml / 1tbls cornflour
15ml / 1tbls water

MERINGUE TOPPING
2 egg whites
100g / 4oz caster sugar
25g / 1oz chopped walnuts or pecans

SERVES 6

1 Put the cherries, blackcurrants, sugar and mixed spice into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until just softened, stirring once.
2 Transfer the fruit with a slotted spoon to a 1.L / 2pt dish. Blend together the cornflour and water and stir into the fruit juices in the bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until thickened, stirring twice. Stir into the fruit.
3 For the meringue, whisk the egg whites until stiff and dry. Reserve 15ml / 1tbls of the sugar. Whisk in half the remaining sugar, 15ml / 1tbls at a time, then fold in the rest with a metal spoon.
4 Swirl the meringue over the fruit. Sprinkle the walnuts and reserved sugar on top.
5 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes or until the meringue is just set on top. Rotate the dish twice. Serve warm.

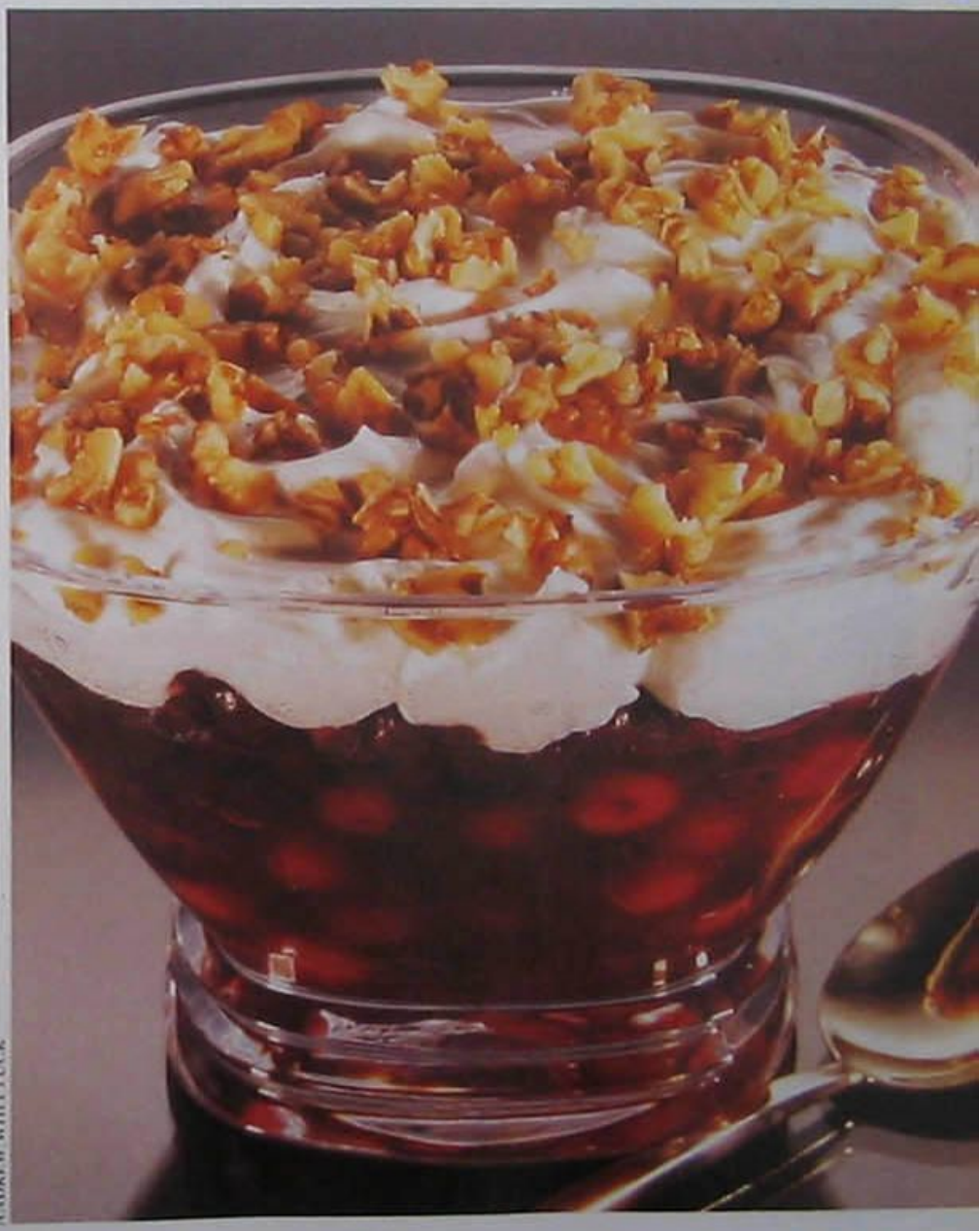
Cook's notes

Copper bowls are best for whisking egg whites. The metal coating has a stabilizing effect on the whites, leaving them firm and bulky. Not many domestic cooks have them, but luckily, a pinch of cream of tartar added when the whites are foamy has a similar effect. Do not use an aluminum bowl as this gives whisked egg whites a very unappetizing grey tinge.

Stages of whisking egg whites

Soft peak stage: *whisk slowly until the whites turn foamy. Add a pinch of cream of tartar, if liked, and whisk at moderate speed until the whites form soft peaks and no liquid egg white can be seen.*

Stiff peak stage: *continue whisking until the whites stand in sharp, dry peaks and stay in place when the bowl is turned upside down. For meringues, continue to whisk until like matt candy then add sugar.*



ANDREW WHITTUCK

Banana coffee cake

12 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

150g / 5oz caster sugar
4 large eggs
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
30ml / 2tbls instant coffee dissolved in 10ml / 2tsp water
25g / 1oz butter, melted

BANANA FILLING
50g / 2oz butter
15ml / 1tbls light soft brown sugar
2 bananas, peeled and chopped

COFFEE ICING
5ml / 1tsp instant coffee dissolved in 20ml / 4tsp water
175g / 6oz icing sugar, sifted
banana slices to decorate

SERVES 6

RAY DUNN

How to microwave Banana coffee cake

Lightly *grease two 18cm / 7in deep cake dishes; base line each with greaseproof paper. Microwave sugar at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.*

Whisk *sugar and eggs in a large bowl until thick and pale. Mixture should hold trail of beaters for 3 seconds when the whisk is lifted.*

Sift *in flour and fold in with a spatula, trickling in dissolved coffee and melted butter, until blended. Pour into cake dishes.*

Microwave *one dish at a time, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes rotating a quarter turn four times, until just set at edges. Stand 5 minutes. Turn out on to a wire rack, peel off paper and cool.*

Prepare *filling: microwave butter and sugar at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until butter melts. Stir well, then stir in the chopped bananas. Spread on one sponge, then place the other sponge on top.*

Make icing: *blend coffee and icing sugar, adding 5ml / 1tsp more hot water if needed to make a coating consistency. Spoon over top of sponge. When set, decorate top edge with banana slices.*

Honeycomb mould

9 mins

Standing time: none

This dessert is always turned out for serving to reveal the separate layers of smooth jelly above a fluffy 'honeycomb' mousse.

3 large eggs, separated
90ml / 6tbls double cream
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
finely grated zest and juice of 2 lemons
20ml / 4tsp powdered gelatine
75g / 3oz sugar
425ml / ¾pt milk

SERVES 6

1 Lightly oil a 1.1L / 2pt jelly mould, then set aside in the refrigerator to chill.
2 Whisk together the egg yolks and cream in a large bowl. Whisk in the cornflour, lemon zest, gelatine and sugar until pale.
3 Microwave the milk in a jug at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until hot. Gradually whisk the milk into the egg yolk mixture until well blended.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-9 minutes, stirring every minute until the mixture is as thick as single cream, then stir in lemon juice.
5 Using clean beaters, whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Strain the lemon custard over the egg whites and fold in using a large metal spoon.
6 Pour into a 1.1L / 2pt jelly mould; cool, then cover and chill for at least 6 hours or until completely set. Turn out to serve.

Cook's notes

Recipes require egg whites to be whisked to different stages of stiffness; mostly they are whisked to the same consistency as the mixture to which they are to be added. When using a hand-held electric whisk or table mixer, use the lowest recommended speed. Beating at high speed breaks down air bubbles, reducing volume.

Zabaglione

2½ mins

Standing time: none

4 large egg yolks
100g / 4oz caster sugar
175ml / 6fl oz Marsala or sweet sherry
crisp biscuits to serve

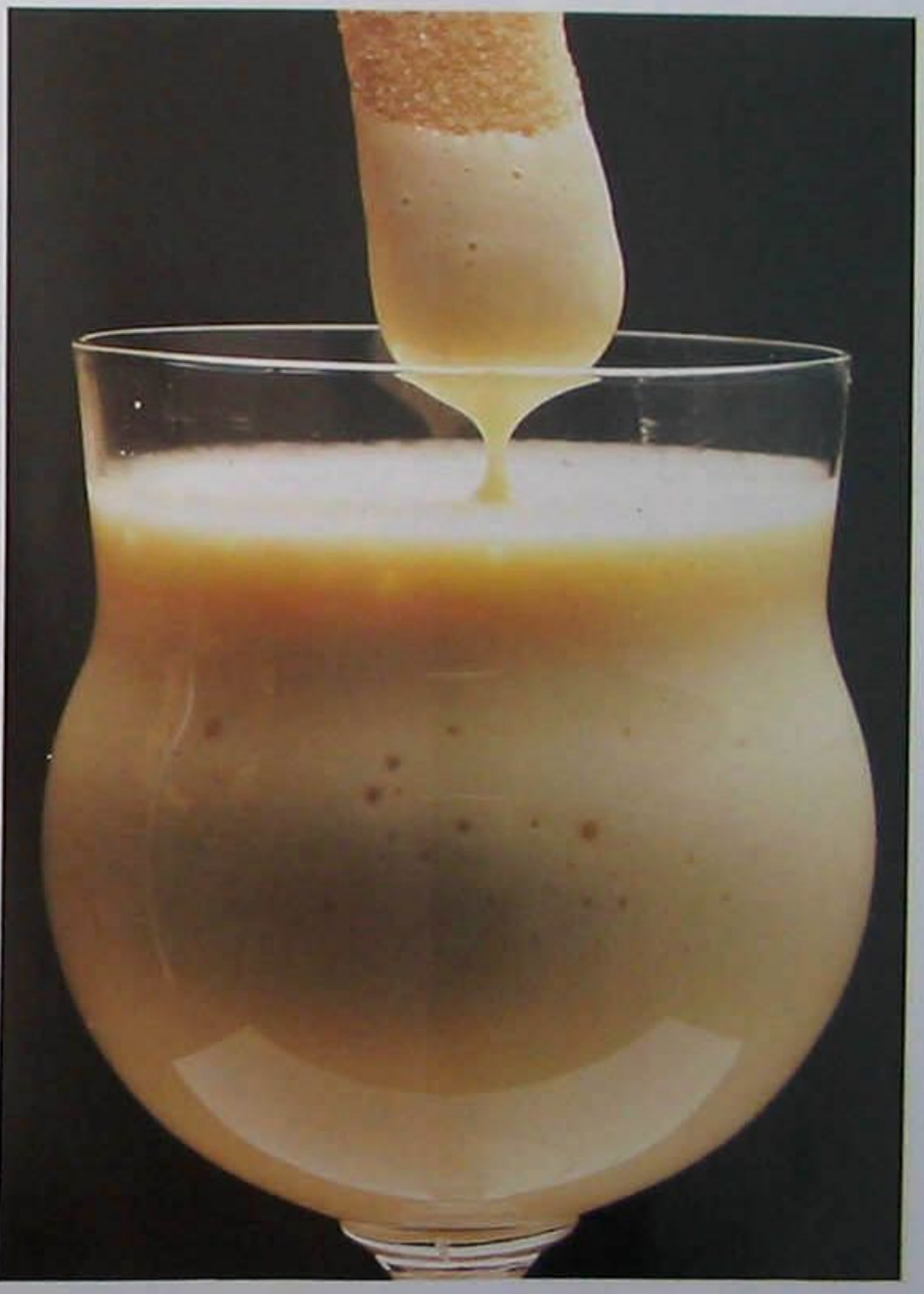
SERVES 4

1 Whisk the egg yolks and sugar together in a large bowl until pale and creamy.
2 Microwave the Marsala or sherry in a jug at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until hot. Gradually whisk into the egg mixture.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-2½ minutes, whisking every 30 seconds, until thickened. Pour into serving glasses immediately, and serve while still warm and thick.

Microtips

For greater volume, bring egg whites for whisking to room temperature. Microwave one chilled egg white for 10-12 seconds at 20-30% (Defrost). Watch carefully.

Zabaglione



RAY DUNS

INTERNATIONAL MENU

Chinese-style meal

For sheer style of presentation, plus a perfect balance of flavours, colours and textures, an Oriental meal is hard to beat. Enjoy a taste of the exotic East with this easy-to-microwave menu.

This beautifully balanced combination of dishes is a feast for the eye as well as the taste buds. All the dishes lend themselves ideally to microwaving.

As an extra bonus for the cook, the whole meal can be prepared ahead, leaving only the finishing and reheating just before serving.

This avoids the danger of toughening the prawns in the rice or overcooking the delicate mange tout in the Yellow Bean Chicken.

For a really authentic atmosphere to the meal, serve a fragrant China tea or saké — warmed rice wine — with the dishes. (Alternatively a lightly chilled, dry white wine would go down well with this menu.) Chopsticks are another atmospheric touch — but a back-up of spoons and forks may be a good idea for irregular users!

Egg drop soup

16 mins

Standing time: 13 mins

2.3L / 4pt hot water
4 quality chicken stock cubes
1 carrot, sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 bouquet garni
1 onion, thinly sliced
pepper to taste
2 eggs, beaten
5 spring onions, trimmed and diagonally sliced

SERVES 6-8

1 Pour the water into a 2.8L / 5pt bowl and add the stock cubes, carrot, celery, bouquet garni, onion and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes or until just boiling, stirring once. Leave to stand, covered, for 10 minutes.

2 Strain the stock into a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until boiling.

3 Pour the eggs into the hot stock in a steady stream, stirring continuously. Cover and leave to stand for 3 minutes.

4 Sprinkle the soup with the spring onions and serve hot.

Cook's notes

For a quicker version of Egg Drop Soup, canned clear chicken broth can be used. Heat the same volume as in the recipe and use in place of the drained stock.

Countdown

In the morning
Microwave the rice, but do not add the prawns. Set aside to cool. Cover and refrigerate. Prepare the almond jelly and syrup for the dessert. Leave jelly to set in the refrigerator when cool. Prepare the soup — stand to allow the flavours to blend, then strain. Do not add the egg.

In the afternoon
Microwave the Red-glazed Pork. Set aside, covered, to cool. Microwave the Yellow Bean Chicken, but do not add the mange tout. Microwave the Steamed Vegetables, set aside, covered, to cool. Set the table and arrange decorations.

Thirty minutes before serving
Add the mange tout to the chicken; stir well and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4-8 minutes, stirring once, until the mange tout are tender and the chicken is hot and cooked. Cover with foil, shiny side in. Add the prawns to the rice and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until hot through, stirring twice. Assemble the dessert. Microwave the soup at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, or until boiling. Stir in the egg and proceed as in the recipe. Microwave the pork, covered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, stirring once, while the soup is served.

While clearing the soup course
Microwave the vegetables at 100% (High), covered, for 6-8 minutes, or until hot through, stirring once. Serve the pork, chicken, vegetables and rice dishes at the same time.

MENU

Egg Drop Soup
Well-flavoured clear soup with egg

Red-glazed Pork
Tender pork with crisp vegetables and tomato

Yellow Bean Chicken
Gingered chicken in piquant sauce with mange tout

Steamed Vegetables
Oriental-style, lightly cooked vegetables

Prawns with Rice
Special fried rice with soy and prawns

Almond Jelly Dessert
Almond-flavoured jelly served with fruits and syrup

SERVES 6-8

Red-glazed pork

12½ mins

Standing time: none

Pork tenderloin is a particularly good cut of meat for this recipe, it is tender, succulent and particularly lean.

40g / 1½oz butter
700g / 1½lb boneless pork, cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
2 celery stalks, cut into thin diagonal slices
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped into 6mm / ¼in strips
3 spring onions, cut into 12mm / ½in slices

GLAZE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
275ml / ½pt tomato juice
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the butter in a large casserole dish. Cover and microwave for 30-45 seconds until melted.
2 Stir in pork, celery and green pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until pork is no longer pink. Stir two or three times during the cooking time. Stir in onions, cover and set aside.
3 Blend cornflour and lemon juice in a measuring jug, then add remaining glaze ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until boiling, stirring every minute.
4 Stir the glaze into the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Serve immediately.

Top Left: *Egg Drop Soup*
Right: *Red-glazed Pork*

Cook's notes

Yellow bean sauce is made from soya beans and spices and is available from speciality shops. Once opened it can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a month. This sauce is frequently used in Chinese dishes as a basting sauce for spare ribs, an addition to stir fry vegetables, rice or bamboo shoots.

Yellow bean chicken

6 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls sesame oil
450g / 1lb boneless chicken breasts, skinned and thinly sliced
2.5cm / 1in fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
45ml / 3tbls yellow bean sauce
50g / 2oz roasted cashew nuts
225g / 8oz mange tout peas, trimmed

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the oil in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, until very hot.
2 Add chicken and ginger, stirring well. Cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until chicken is cooked. Stir every minute.
3 Stir in the yellow bean sauce, cashew nuts and mange tout peas, mixing well. Make sure that all the ingredients are evenly coated with sauce. Microwave at 100% (High), covered, for 2-3 minutes, stirring twice. Serve immediately.

Steamed vegetables

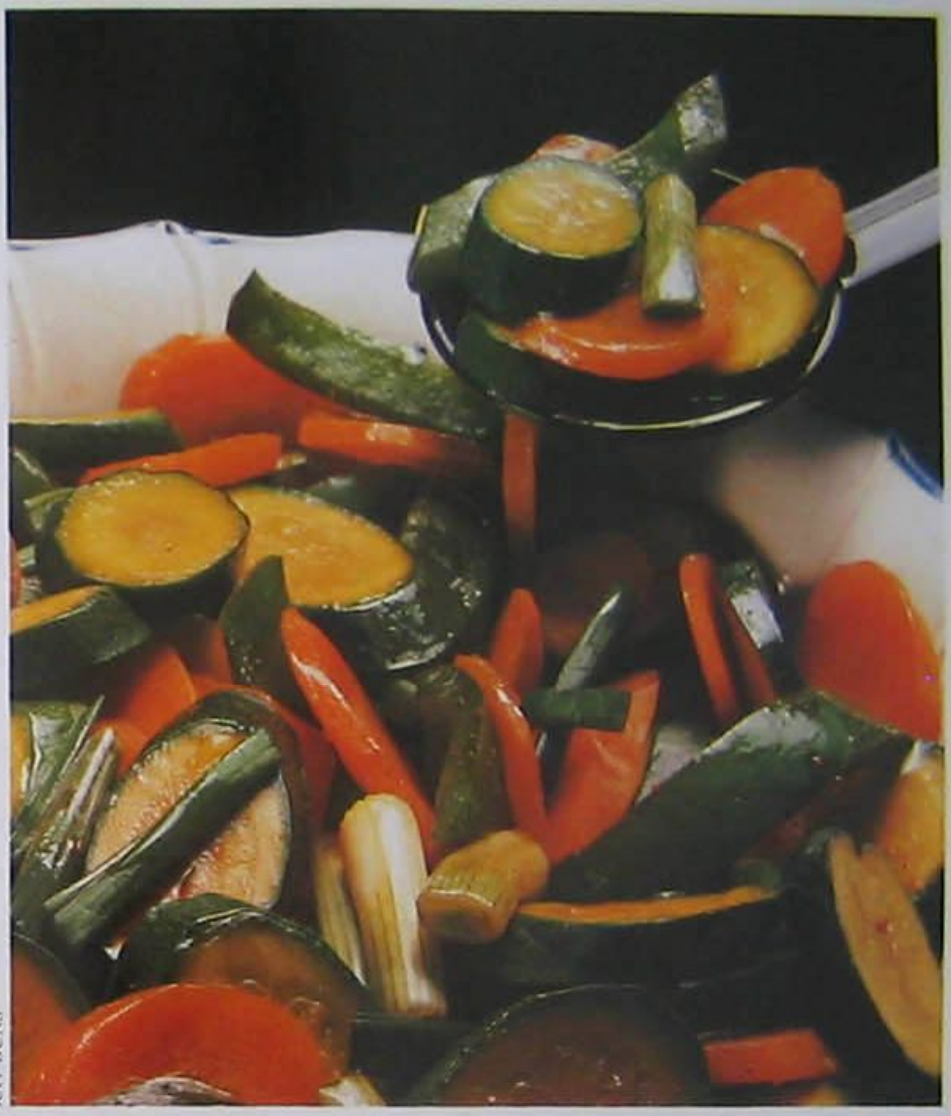
10 mins

Standing time: none

3 courgettes, trimmed and cut in 6mm / ¼in diagonal slices
4 carrots, diagonally sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and cut in 12mm / ½in strips
10 spring onions, trimmed and cut in 2.5cm / 1in lengths
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls dry sherry

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the courgettes, carrots, green pepper and spring onions in a large shallow dish. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring once.
2 Blend the cornflour with salt and pepper to taste, sugar, soy sauce and sherry. Stir the liquid into the vegetables.
3 Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, stirring twice, until the sauce has started to thicken, and the vegetables are still tender-crisp.



RAY DUNS

Steamed Vegetables

Prawns with rice

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700ml / 1¼pt hot water
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
350g / 12oz long-grain rice
1 chicken stock cube
5 spring onions, chopped
1 egg, beaten
200g / 7oz prawns

SERVES 6-8

1 Mix water, sauce, rice and stock cube in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.
2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 16-18 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the rice is tender and the liquid has been absorbed.
3 Stir in the spring onions. Cover and leave to stand for 5 minutes.
4 Stir in the egg. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes to set the egg, stirring once. Stir in the prawns and serve immediately.

Microtips

To boil rice, wash 125g / 5oz. Put into 2.3L / 4pt casserole with 350ml / 12fl oz boiling water, pinch of salt. Microwave at 100% (High) 3 minutes, then 50% (Medium) 12 minutes. Stir. Stand 4 minutes.

Almond jelly dessert

3 mins

Standing time: none

475ml / 16fl oz milk
17.5ml / 3½tsp (1 sachet) powdered gelatine
75g / 3oz sugar
10ml / 2tsp almond flavouring
8 maraschino cherries, to serve

SYRUP
60ml / 2tbls sugar
90ml / 6tbls hot water
225ml / 8fl oz cold water
312g / 11oz can mandarin oranges, syrup reserved
5ml / 1tsp almond flavouring

SERVES 6-8

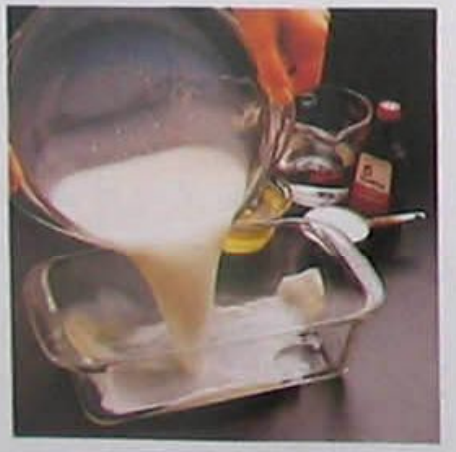
Cook's notes

When dissolving gelatine, take care that the liquid is not too hot. Boiling liquid makes gelatine 'rope' and spoils its setting qualities.

When folding whipped cream into a gelatine mixture. Stand the dish in a bowl of iced water and stir constantly until the mixture starts to thicken. Fold the cream quickly into the mixture.

How to microwave Almond jelly dessert

Pour *175ml / 6fl oz of the milk into a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1-1¼ minutes, or until hot. Stir in gelatine. Microwave rest of milk and sugar, covered, at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, stirring once.*



Add *the almond flavouring and gelatine mixture to the hot milk and stir well to blend thoroughly. Pour the mixture into a 20 × 12.5cm / 8 × 5in loaf dish and set aside to cool. Refrigerate for 4-6 hours or overnight, so that the jelly has set completely.*

Make *the syrup: mix sugar and hot water; when dissolved, add the cold water, reserved mandarin syrup and almond flavouring. To serve, cut jelly into 16 triangles using a sharp knife. Decorate with cherries and mandarin oranges and serve with the syrup.*

Roasting pork

Roast pork for Sunday lunch is a firm family favourite. Cooked in the microwave it stays moist and succulent. Team it with a fruity stuffing or glaze for a hearty, satisfying meal.

Pork is a rich meat and cooks well in the microwave because of its high fat content. This keeps the meat tender and succulent. Always choose pork that is pale pink with firm, white fat.

Pork leg, shoulder, loin or fillet can be roasted in the microwave. All of these joints can be stuffed or served with tart fruit sauces to complement the richness of the meat. Onion and garlic are also very tasty and popular with pork.

Microwaving pork. Since pork crackling is best cooked separately (see Cook's notes, page 1554) remove the rind and excess fat from the surface of the pork. The thinner the layer of fat on the joint, the more it will brown. To encourage the surface of the meat to brown to an appetizing golden colour, and

Roast Loin of Pork

RAY DUNS

to enhance the flavour, coat the surface with honey or sprinkle with sugar and salt. If you do leave the rind on, rub salt into it halfway through the cooking time to brown and firm it.

Weigh the joint complete with stuffing if this is used and calculate the cooking time (see chart on page 1555). Divide this time in half and microwave the joint fat side down on a roasting rack so that the pork is raised out of its own juice at 100% (High) for the first 5 minutes of the calculated time. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for the remainder of the first half of the calculated time. Turn the meat over and continue to microwave at 50% (Medium) until done.

Testing for doneness. Cooking times given are only meant to be used as a guide since joints vary in their fat content and density and this affects the amount of time the meat takes to cook. A microwave-safe meat thermometer can give accurate results. Insert it into the thickest part of the meat, avoiding the fat and the stuffing. Remove the meat from the microwave when the recommended temperature is reached. Cover the joint loosely with foil, shiny side in, and leave it to stand for about 15 minutes to finish cooking. To test for doneness, pierce the meat with a skewer or fork and if the juices run clear, the meat is done.

Orange stuffed pork shoulder

59¼ mins

Standing time: 15 mins

1.4kg / 3lb boned shoulder of pork, rind removed

STUFFING

15g / ½oz butter
1 onion, chopped
1 large cooking apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped
grated zest and flesh of 1 large orange
25g / 1oz fresh breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls brown sugar
orange slices and watercress to garnish

SERVES 4-6

1 Make the stuffing. Combine butter, onion and apple in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in orange and zest, breadcrumbs, salt and pepper.
2 Lay pork out, fat side down. Spread stuffing over meat, roll up and tie securely with string and score the fat.
3 Weigh the joint and calculate the cooking time. Divide this time in half. Rub all over with sugar and a sprinkling of salt and place fat side down on a roasting rack.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for the rest of the first half of the time.
5 Turn pork over and microwave at 50% (Medium) for remainder of time or until juices run clear when meat is pierced with a skewer.
6 Cover loosely with foil and stand for 15 minutes.
7 Garnish with orange slices and watercress. Serve with rice pilaff.

Cook's notes

Crispy pork crackling is a real treat with roast pork. The best way to achieve this is to remove the rind from the joint, score it, salt it evenly and pop it under a hot grill for about 5 minutes, or until done to your liking.

A sprinkling of sugar with the salt, or a honey glaze on the pork fat will help it to brown.

Roast loin of pork

45 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

1.4kg / 3lb loin of pork, chined with rind removed if preferred
15ml / 1tbls honey
10ml / 2tsp dried thyme

SERVES 4-6

How to microwave Roast loin of pork

Weigh *joint and calculate time. Microwave honey for 15 seconds at 100% (High) and brush over meat. Coat joint with thyme and place on rack, fat down. Insert thermometer.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for first 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for remainder of first half of cooking time. Turn joint over so that fat side is up.*

Microwave *for rest of calculated time at 50% (Medium), or until internal temperature is 74°C / 165°F. Cover with foil and stand for 15 minutes, or until temperature is 78°C / 170°F.*

RAY DUNS

Microwave times for roasting pork to well done

CUT OF PORK	TOTAL COOKING TIME	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	TIME AT 50% (MEDIUM)	FINAL COOKING TEMPERATURE
Leg and loin (on the bone)	15-17 mins per 450g / 1lb	5 mins	Rest of calculated time	74°C / 165°F
Loin (boned and rolled)*	13-15 mins per 450g / 1lb	5 mins	Rest of calculated time	74°C / 165°F
Leg, shoulder (boned and rolled)	15-18 mins per 450g / 1lb	5 mins	Rest of calculated time	74°C / 165°F
Tenderloin	10-15 mins per 450g / 1lb	3 mins	Rest of calculated time	74°C / 165°F

* Timing depends on thickness and tightness of roll as well as weight. A thick, tightly rolled joint will take longer to cook through.

Microwaving Apple-glazed pork

Spread *75ml / 5tbls apple glaze over the pork fillet, reserving any extra. Insert a microwave-safe thermometer, if using. This may not give accurate readings with a small fillet.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for rest of time, or until internal temperature reaches 75°C / 165°F. Stand the pork for 10 minutes, or until temperature is 78°C / 170°F.*

Apple-glazed pork

16 mins

Standing time: 12 mins

450g / 1lb pork tenderloin

GLAZE

450g / 1lb cooking apples, peeled, cored and sliced
50g / 2oz sugar, or to taste
30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp nutmeg or cinnamon

SERVES 4

1 Place apples in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Stir in sugar, water, lemon juice and cinnamon or nutmeg.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until just soft. Stand for 2 minutes.
3 Weigh pork and calculate cooking time. (See chart, page 1555). Divide the cooking time in half.
4 Place pork on a microwave roasting rack and shield ends with a thin strip of foil, shiny side in.
5 Microwave pork at 100% (High) for first 3 minutes. Reduce power and microwave at 50% (Medium) for the rest of the first half of the calculated cooking time.
6 Remove foil and turn pork over. Spread apple glaze over pork as shown in Steps, below left.
7 If not using a thermometer, test for doneness at the end of the calculated cooking time. Pierce the meat and check the juices. They should run clear.
8 Cover loosely with foil and stand for 10 minutes.
9 Serve with potatoes, and the reserved apple glaze.

VARIATION

Try Pineapple glaze with pork fillet for a change. Mix 376g / 15¼oz can crushed pineapple, drained, 5ml / 1tsp mustard, 5ml / 1tsp brown sugar and a pinch of dried thyme in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until hot, and spread 75ml / 5tbls of the glaze over the pork as shown in the Steps left.

Pineapple-glazed Pork; a variation on Apple-glazed Pork above.

Pork leg with prune stuffing

56¼ mins

Standing time: 20 mins

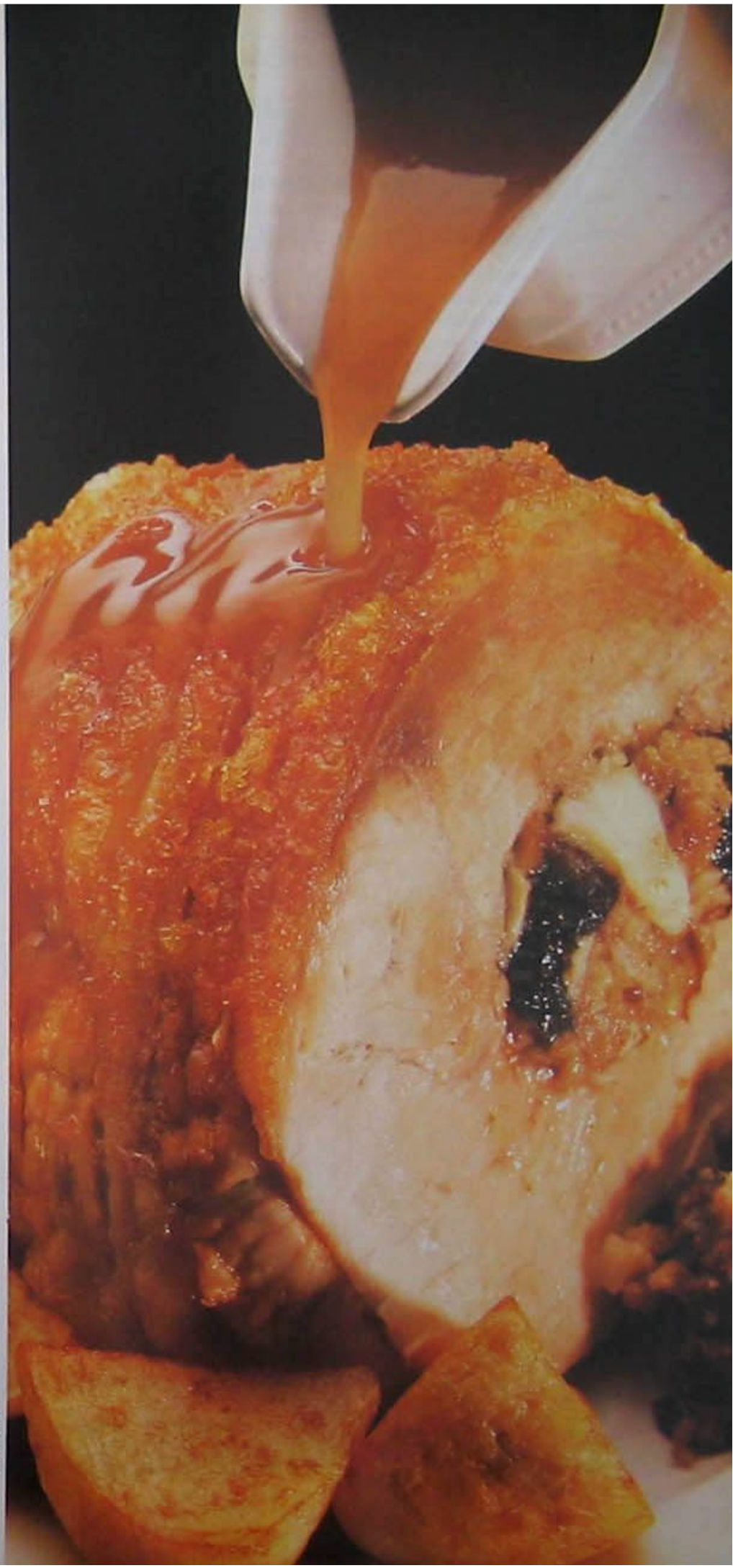
1.4-1.6kg / 3-3½lb pork leg, boned weight, with rind removed
50g / 2oz stoned prunes, quartered
1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and sliced
½ onion, finely chopped
1.5ml / 1½tsp vegetable oil
25g / 1oz fresh brown breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls brown sugar

SERVES 4-6

1 Make the stuffing. Place prunes in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl, cover with cold water and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes or until boiling. Stand 5 minutes. Drain.
2 Place apple, onion and oil in a 0.5L / 1pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until soft. Stir in breadcrumbs, seasoning and prunes.
3 Fill cavity of pork leg loosely with stuffing and tie securely with string to form a neat parcel.
4 Weigh pork and calculate cooking time. Score fat, sprinkle evenly with sugar, salt and pepper and place, fat side down, on a roasting rack. Microwave at 100% (High) for first 5 minutes of calculated cooking time. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for remainder of first half of time.
5 Turn pork over and microwave at 50% (Medium) for remainder of time. Test for doneness.
6 Cover joint loosely with foil and stand for 15 minutes.
7 Serve with potatoes and gravy.

Microtips

To make cider gravy: drain juices from meat into a jug and skim off fat. Add 10ml / 2tsp cornflour and stir until smooth. Add 150ml / ¼pt cider and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until smooth and thick; stir twice. Add salt and pepper to taste.



DON LAST

Just desserts

It's easy to serve desserts oozing with flavour and goodness — just use fresh, natural ingredients microwaved to make fabulous cheesecakes, fruity jellies and crisps and feather-light fluffs.

You no longer have to feel guilty when you have a slice or spoonful of a mouth-watering pudding because pure, fresh ingredients and microwave cooking can help make your favourite desserts deliciously good for you. Discover the do's and don'ts of healthy desserts, then just gradually introduce the changes to your sweet creations — this way they actually become a habit, and part of your diet so are easy to stick to.

Where to start

Choosing pure wholesome ingredients is the best place to begin:
Fruit is naturally sweet, low in calories and a useful source of vitamins and minerals, as well as a good source of fibre. What's more,

it is really appetizing and filling and can be simply puréed into mousses, yoghurt fools and sauces for some delicious delights.

Cut calories by poaching fresh fruit in unsweetened fruit juice instead of a sugar syrup, and replacing tart cooking apples with sweeter fresh eating apples.

When fresh fruit is out of season you can easily substitute canned or frozen. Look for fruit canned in natural juices with no added sugar. Commercially frozen fruit is also available — just check labels carefully to see that no extra sweetening is added.

Low-fat dairy products make for healthier eating, too. Skimmed milk, natural yoghurt and low-fat cheeses, such as quark or ricotta, have a fraction of the calorie and cholesterol value but all the taste of full-fat ingredients.

A high-fibre content is important for a healthy diet. Use wholewheat products such as flour and biscuits. These also give a lovely rich colour to finished dishes, which is a great advantage with microwave cooking. Fruit, too, has plenty of natural fibre.

Gingered Fruit Boats

How the microwave helps

The microwave can actually help you to make more healthy puddings — not only is it so quick to turn out a delicious dessert that you will no longer feel tempted to dip into the biscuit tin, but cooking by microwave brings out the best in the food, too. Colours and flavours are accentuated, and the liquid required for poaching means less vitamins and minerals are lost. As microwaving is a moist method of cooking (ingredients generally cook in their own juices), there is less need for added creamy or sugary sauces. You will find that even reheated desserts retain their texture, appearance and food value due to the speed of microwave cooking.

Gingered fruit boats

2 mins

Standing time: none

1 pineapple, weighing about 1.4kg / 3lb
225g / 8oz can dark, sweet cherries, drained and stoned
425g / 15oz can apricot halves in natural juice, drained with 75ml / 5tbls juice reserved
15ml / 1tbls honey
15ml / 1tbls chopped stem ginger
30ml / 2tbls stem ginger syrup (from the jar)

SERVES 4

1 Cut the pineapple into quarters lengthways through the crown. Remove the flesh with a serrated fruit knife, leaving boat-shaped shells about 12mm / ½in thick. Reserve the shells.

2 Cut the flesh into small chunks and place in a mixing bowl. Stir in the cherries and apricots; set aside.

3 In a small bowl, combine the honey, chopped ginger and syrup with the reserved apricot juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until mixture boils, stirring once. Pour the hot liquid over the fruit.

4 Cover and chill in the refrigerator for about 4 hours, stirring once. To serve, mound a quarter of the chilled fruit mixture on to each pineapple boat.

Tips for healthy desserts

Use more:	Use less:
* High fibre food – wholewheat products, fresh fruit and nuts	* Refined products, such as white flours and low-fibre biscuits
* Natural flavourings such as spices, grated citrus zest, pure fruit juices and carob chocolate	* Sugar, sugar syrups, chocolate and artificial flavourings
* Fruit — either fresh, dried, frozen without sugar or canned in natural juices	* Processed foods such as fruit pie fillings, and sweetened canned fruit
* Low-fat products, such as skimmed milk, low-fat yoghurt, low-fat cheeses like quark, ricotta and cottage cheese	* Fatty products, such as full-fat milk, cream, cheese or butter, processed cheeses and sweetened, canned condensed milk

Mandarin fluff

1½ mins

Standing time: none

This dessert can be made up to 2 days in advance and chilled.

3 × 300g / 11oz cans mandarin segments in natural juice, drained
175g / 6oz can unsweetened crushed pineapple, in natural juice, drained
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
125ml / 4fl oz water
17.5ml / 3½tsp (1 sachet) powdered gelatine
2 egg whites
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar

SERVES 6

1 In a blender, purée two cans of the mandarin segments, crushed pineapple and flavouring.
2 Place the water in a bowl and sprinkle over the gelatine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes then stir briskly with a fork until the gelatine has dissolved and the liquid is clear.
3 Stir in the purée, then cover and chill until the mixture begins to thicken.
4 Beat the egg whites in a bowl until they form stiff peaks. Gradually beat in the sugar and continue to beat until stiff peaks form again. Fold the egg whites and sugar into the fruit mixture.
5 To serve: divide three-quarters of the remaining mandarin segments between six small dessert bowls. Spoon the purée mixture equally between each bowl and top with remaining mandarin segments. Cover and place in the refrigerator to chill for at least 2 hours or until the mixture has set.

Raspberry layer jelly

8½ mins

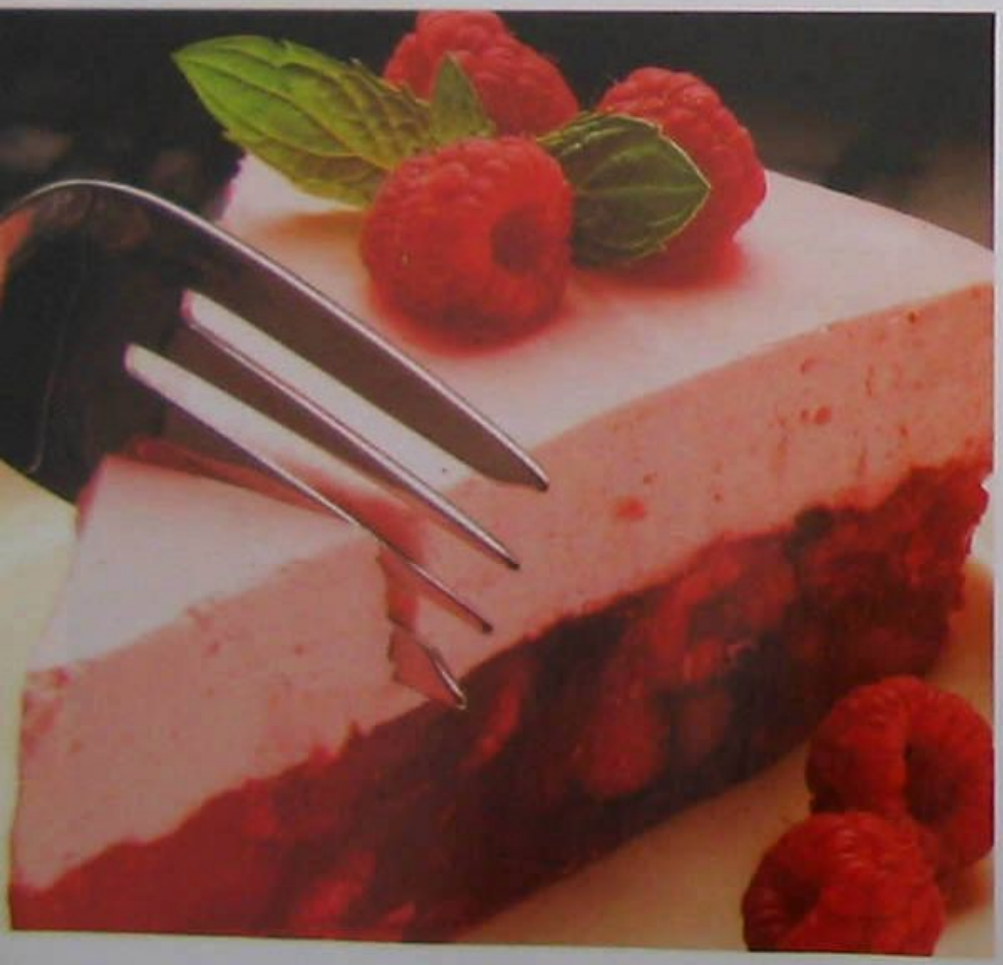
Standing time: none

BASE
175ml / 6fl oz low-calorie lemon and lime soda or low-calorie lemon squash
7.5ml / 1½tsp powdered gelatine
175g / 6oz frozen raspberries
10ml / 2tsp honey

TOP LAYER
175g / 6oz frozen raspberries
10ml / 2tsp powdered gelatine
240g / 8½oz thick Greek-style yoghurt

SERVES 8-10

1 Place the lemon drink in a measuring jug and sprinkle over the gelatine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring twice until gelatine is dissolved and the liquid is clear.
2 Place the raspberries in a 18cm / 7in round dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until thawed, separating twice.
3 Pour the gelatine mixture over the thawed raspberries. Add the honey and stir gently. Chill in the refrigerator for about 2 hours, until the liquid is set but still slightly tacky.
4 For the top layer: thaw the raspberries in a bowl at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, separating twice. Sieve the raspberries over the bowl to collect the juice; reserve the fruit pulp.
5 Sprinkle the gelatine over the juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1¼ minutes, then stir until the gelatine is dissolved.
6 Stir in 15ml / 1tbls of the raspberry pulp. Allow to cool slightly, then fold into the Greek yoghurt. Pour over the layer of almost set raspberry jelly in the dish. Chill for at least 1 hour, or until set. Cut the layered jelly into wedges to serve.



Raspberry Layer Jelly

Slimmer's notes

Some of these desserts are just the answer for the calorie-conscious. The Mandarin Fluff is as light in calories as it is in texture. It needs no added cream to be enjoyed, and provides only 80Cal / 335kJ per portion. The light, refreshing Raspberry Layer Jelly gives a mere 60Cal / 250kJ per slice. The Honey Yoghurt makes a good topping with 115Cal / 485kJ per serving.

Fruity cheesecake

15 mins

Standing time: none

This cheesecake keeps for 2-3 days in the refrigerator.

40g / 1½oz polyunsaturated margarine
175g / 6oz wholewheat bran biscuits, crushed
10 strawberry fans, to decorate

FILLING
700g / ½lb cottage cheese with pineapple
45ml / 3tbls Greek-style yoghurt
15ml / 1tbls honey, to taste
few drops of vanilla flavouring
4 egg whites

SERVES 10

1 Place the margarine in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the biscuit crumbs.
2 Grease the base of a 23cm / 9in dish, then press the crumbs firmly over the base. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until set, rotating the dish once.
3 Purée the cottage cheese with pineapple in a blender. Stir in the yoghurt, honey and flavouring, then beat in the egg whites. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until very hot, stirring with a whisk every minute
4 Pour the mixture into the prepared dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes rotating the dish a quarter turn twice.
5 Cool then chill for at least 2 hours. Decorate and serve.

How to prepare strawberry fans

Cut *the strawberries lengthways into thin slices, without cutting through the base; do not remove the stalk.*

Spread *out the slices of each strawberry to form a fan shape. Place one on each piece of cheesecake.*

Quick Peach Crisp

Quick peach crisp

6 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 16oz can sliced peaches in natural juice, drained, or 4 fresh peaches, halved, stoned and sliced
50g / 2oz raisins
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
3.5ml / ¾tsp ground mixed spice
135ml / 9tbls Honey Yoghurt (see recipe, right) to serve

TOPPING
65g / 2½oz rolled oats
50g / 2oz wholewheat flour
45ml / 3tbls soft light brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls chopped walnuts or pecans
40g / 1½oz polyunsaturated margarine

SERVES 9

1 Place the peaches in a 23cm / 9in baking dish. Add the raisins, lemon juice and spice, mixing well. Spread evenly in the dish.

2 In a small mixing bowl, combine the rolled oats, flour, brown sugar and nuts. Rub in the margarine until the mixture forms coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over the peach and raisin mixture.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the peaches are tender and the mixture bubbles around the edges. Serve them warm with Honey Yoghurt.

Honey yoghurt

11 mins

Standing time: none

For a thinner texture, stir well before serving.

200g / 7oz low-fat dried skimmed milk
0.8L / 1½pt water
45ml / 3tbls honey
10ml / 2tsp vanilla flavouring
75ml / 5tbls low-fat yoghurt

SERVES 8

1 Put the dried milk into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole and whisk in the water. Stir in honey and vanilla. Microwave at 100% (High) for 11-14 minutes until the temperature is 88°C / 190°F, stirring once.

2 Allow to cool to 46°C / 115°F, then blend in the natural yoghurt. Cover with stretch wrap. Insert a microwave thermometer.

3 Leave in the microwave undisturbed for 2-4 hours, checking every 30 minutes. If the temperature falls below 43°C / 110°F, microwave at 30% (Low) for ½-2 minutes, or until temperature reaches 46°C / 115°F.

4 When the mixture appears set, remove thermometer and refrigerate for several hours. Serve within 4-5 days.

Cook's notes

Some brands of dried skimmed milk have added vegetable fat which boosts the calorie content — read the label before buying and choose a low-fat type without any added fat.

Carob yoghurt

15 mins

Standing time: none

200g / 7oz low-fat dried skimmed milk
0.8L / 1½pt water
10ml / 2tsp vanilla flavouring
3 × 60g / 2½oz bars plain carob chocolate
75ml / 5tbls low-fat yoghurt

SERVES 8

1 Put the dried milk into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole and slowly whisk in the water. Stir in the vanilla flavouring and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-14 minutes, or until the temperature reaches 88°C / 190°F, stirring once. Remove from microwave and insert a thermometer; allow the yoghurt to cool to 46°C / 115°F.
2 Microwave the carob chocolate at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until melted, stirring once.
3 When milk has cooled to correct temperature, whisk in the melted chocolate and stir in the yoghurt. Cover with stretch wrap. Insert a microwave thermometer into the mixture through the centre of the wrap.
4 Place the bowl in the microwave and leave, undisturbed, for 2-4 hours, checking the temperature every 30 minutes. If the temperature falls below 43°C / 110°F, microwave at 30% (Low) for ½-2 minutes, or until the temperature reaches 46°C / 115°F.
5 When the mixture appears set, remove the thermometer and transfer the bowl to the refrigerator. Chill for several hours. Keep the yoghurt in the refrigerator and use within 2-3 days. Serve with brown sugar, if liked.

Strawberry popsicles

6 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

Treat the children to these fruity ices instead of sickly sweet lollies.

450g / 1lb frozen strawberries
275ml / ½pt cold water
200ml / 7fl oz unsweetened concentrated strawberry and apple syrup
3½tsp / 17.5ml (1 sachet) powdered gelatine
125ml / 4fl oz skimmed milk

MAKES 9 POPSICLES

1 Place the strawberries in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes. Stand for 5-10 minutes, then chop into pieces.
2 Combine the cold water and strawberry syrup in a measuring jug. Pour half into a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Sprinkle over the gelatine and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring twice, until the gelatine is dissolved.
3 Stir in the remaining diluted syrup and the skimmed milk. Add the strawberries and mix well. Pour into a freezer container, cover and freeze for about 1 hour, or until thickened, stirring twice.
4 Pour into plastic cups to half-fill. Place on a tray. Insert a wooden lolly stick into the centre of each cup. Freeze until solid.
5 To serve, leave at room temperature for a few minutes then peel off the paper.

VARIATION

Red grape popsicles: substitute 475ml / 17fl oz unsweetened red grape juice for the cold water and strawberry-apple syrup. Continue as directed. Like the unsweetened concentrated syrup, red grape juice has no added sugar. Both are available from health food stores and should be stored in the refrigerator.

Above: *Strawberry Popsicles*
Left: *Carob Yoghurt*

Flavoured butters

A pat of well-flavoured butter — either savoury or sweet — is a swift, sure way to perk up a simple hot dish and make it meltingly good. Use them to spice savoury fare and dress up desserts.

Savoury and sweet butters are made quite simply by softening the butter and beating in a variety of flavourings. Softening the butter in the microwave takes all the hard work out of the process. Once the flavours have been incorporated, shape the butter into a roll using stretch wrap. Flavoured butters store well in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. (Alternatively, they can be frozen — see Freezer notes page 1567).

Serving flavoured butters

The amount of flavoured butter in the recipes here makes enough to serve six if using for pats, although the sweet butters will go further if used as a spread. Slice rounds of butter from the roll as needed. To make especially attractive pats, draw the prongs of a fork along the length of the chilled roll all the way round, then slice with a serrated knife.

Alternatively, spread a sweet butter in a shallow dish lined with stretch wrap, to make a layer about 6mm / ¼in thick. Chill well, then cut into pretty shapes with dampened pastry or petit four cutters. Use to top individual sponge puddings, fruit crumbles or crepes.

A pat of savoury butter cheers up plainly microwaved vegetables meat or fish with the minimum of extra work. Sweet butters add richness to baked fruit, pancakes or plain sponge pudding. If wished (and provided the food is suitable), pop the butter-topped dish back into the microwave for a few seconds at 30% (Low) to melt the butter. Savoury butters can also be used to enrich sauces. Allow 15g / ½oz butter to each 275ml / ½pt sauce; whisk butter flakes into the cooked sauce a few at a time, just before serving.

Brandy Butter with Christmas Pudding

Raspberry butter

10 secs

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz unsalted butter
100g / 4oz icing sugar, sifted
15ml / 1tbls raspberry or strawberry jam

MAKES ABOUT 215g / 7½oz

1 Soften the butter in the microwave, see page 1567. Beat in the remaining ingredients.
2 Use as a spread on toast, pancakes or croissants. Or, chill until firm, cut into pats and serve with hot puddings.

Honey butter

10 secs

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz unsalted butter
45ml / 3tbls honey

MAKES ABOUT 75g / 3oz

1 Soften the butter in the microwave, see step page 1567. Beat in the honey.
2 Use as a spread on waffles, toast, muffins, crumpets and banana cake. Or, cover and chill until firm and serve with hot baked fruit or puddings.

Left: *Honey Butter*
Right: *Raspberry Butter*

Sweet butters and how to serve them

Title	Ingredients	Method	Serving suggestions
Brandy	75g / 3oz softened unsalted butter, 150g / 5oz sifted icing sugar, 15-20ml / 3-4tsp brandy.	Beat all ingredients together. Chill or use as spread.	Traditional accompaniment for Christmas pudding and mince pies. Spread on malt loaf.
Rum	75g / 3oz softened, unsalted butter, 150g / 5oz sifted icing sugar, 15-20ml / 3-4tsp dark rum.	As above.	Alternative accompaniment for Christmas pudding. Use pats to top baked bananas.
Liqueur	75g / 3oz softened, unsalted butter, 150g / 5oz sifted icing sugar, 15-20ml / 3-4tsp liqueur.	As above.	With hot fruit pies or baked fruit, fillings for cakes.
Sweet spiced	75g / 3oz softened, unsalted butter, 75g / 3oz sifted icing sugar, 5ml / 1tsp ground mixed spice, grated zest of 1 orange.	As above.	Hot fruit desserts, spread on croissants or fruit bread.

Savoury butters and how to serve them

Title	Ingredients	Method	Serving suggestions
Maitre d'hotel	75g / 3oz softened butter, 30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley, finely grated rest of lemon, juice of ½ a lemon, salt and pepper.	Beat all ingredients together. Form a roll and chill.	Steaks, chops, fish and vegetables — very versatile and will enhance almost any food.
Anchovy	75g / 3oz softened butter, 6 canned anchovy fillets, drained and chopped, 10ml / 2tsp lemon juice, pepper.	As above.	Fish and seafood or stir into hot pasta. Spread on savoury biscuits and serve as a snack or canape.
Mustard	75g / 3oz softened butter, 15-20ml / 3-4tsp wholegrain mustard, pepper.	As above.	Good with beef and bacon. Try with chops, fish steaks and sausages.
Green peppercorn	75g / 3oz softened butter, 15-20ml / 3-4tsp green peppercorns, lightly crushed.	As above.	Use with meat (especially steak) and poultry, game meat and birds.
Spicy lemon	75g / 3oz softened butter, grated zest of 2 lemons, pinch of nutmeg and ground allspice.	As above.	Vegetables, fish and seafood. Try with baked potatoes and corn-on-the-cob.
Green herb	75g / 3oz softened butter, 10ml/ 2tsp snipped chives, 10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley, 2.5ml / ½tsp chopped coriander leaves, and pepper to taste.	As above.	Meat, poultry, fish, vegetables.

Potatoes with fennel butter

9¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb potatoes, sliced
50ml / 2fl oz water
knob of butter
grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

FENNEL BUTTER
75g / 3oz butter
large pinch of fennel seeds, crushed
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
1 spring onion, chopped

SERVES 4-6

1 Make butter: to soften see step page 1567. Beat in remaining ingredients, form into a roll in stretch wrap, then chill.
2 Microwave potatoes, water and butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes. Stir once. Stand for 5 minutes. Drain.
3 Transfer to serving dish and top with pats of fennel butter. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Potatoes with Fennel Butter

Russian chicken rolls

7¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 chicken breast supremes, about 150g / 5oz each, beaten out to a 6mm / ¼in thickness
50g / 2oz butter
60ml / 4tbls browned breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp paprika

BUTTER STUFFING
100g / 4oz butter
1 spring onion, finely sliced
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
1 garlic clove, crushed
white pepper

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the butter for the stuffing at 30% (Low) for 10 seconds, or until softened. Beat in remaining stuffing ingredients.
2 Shape the butter into a 10cm / 4in roll; wrap in stretch wrap and chill in freezer for 10 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, melt the 50g / 2oz butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds.
4 Place the breadcrumbs, parsley and paprika in a shallow bowl.
5 Cut the chilled butter into quarters and place one piece on the end of each chicken breast. Fold in edges; roll up and secure with cocktail sticks.
6 Brush rolls with melted butter and roll in the breadcrumbs. Place and microwave in a baking dish at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes. Rotate the dish a half turn and rearrange once. Stand 5 minutes.

Russian Chicken Rolls

Freezer notes

All the flavoured butters here can be kept in the freezer for up to 3 months. Shape into a roll, wrap in stretch wrap, then place in a freezer bag, seal and freeze.

To serve, remove from the bag and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 20-30 seconds.

Softening butter in the microwave

Soften *butter before adding other flavourings or before using for spreading. Microwave 75g / 3oz unwrapped butter in a dish at 30% (Low) for 10-45 seconds. (The exact time depends on the initial temperature of the butter — whether it has been taken from the refrigerator or is at cool room temperature.) Rotate the butter a small turn every 15 seconds, and check frequently to make sure it is not getting too warm — remember the butter will continue to soften for a few seconds after being removed from the microwave, and once it is allowed to melt completely, it will no longer be suitable for spreading or creaming.*

STAR RECIPE

Danish pastries

Perfect for a special tea, these rich-flavoured Danish pastries will make a really eye-catching centrepiece for your teatable, and they are much faster and simpler to make with the help of your microwave.

Don't be daunted by the mystique surrounding enriched yeast mixtures — our simple steps will make every stage easy, and the microwave will speed up every part of the cooking procedure, from softening the butter to cooking the pastries themselves.

Take care, when rolling out the pastry, that you do not force the butter out of the mixture by rough handling. The formation of neat layers in the mixture depends on the butter being evenly distributed and rolled into the dough.

If you like, make up double the recommended quantity of glacé icing and drizzle it liberally over all three types of pastry. Decorate some with toasted flaked almonds, or with chopped nuts in a light sugar syrup. If liked, use other fruit in place of apricots.

Danish pastries

12¾ mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Rich Bread Dough (see part 36, page 981), mixed but not risen
150g / 5oz butter
90ml / 6tbls sugar
45ml / 3tbls water

ENVELOPES
6 canned apricot halves, drained thoroughly

WHEELS
25g / 1oz marzipan, divided in three
50g / 2oz icing sugar
water to mix
3 glacé cherry halves

COMBS
60ml / 4tbls chopped nuts
45ml / 3tbls honey
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon or ground mixed spice

MAKES 9

How to microwave Danish pastries

Rest *the dough in a polythene bag in a cool place for 10 minutes. Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 30% (Low) for 10-12 seconds, or until soft. Spread over a piece of greaseproof paper 23 × 7.5cm / 23 × 3 in. Chill.*

Roll *the dough out to a 25cm / 10in square, place the butter in the centre and fold in the sides of the dough to overlap in the centre by 12mm / ½in. Press the ends together to seal. Roll the dough to a strip 45 × 15cm / 18 × 6in on a lightly floured surface.*

Fold *the dough up into three folds. Rest in a polythene bag in the refrigerator for 10 minutes. Repeat the rolling, folding and chilling twice more, giving the dough a quarter turn, clockwise, each time. Rest, chill and divide into equal thirds.*

Microwave *the sugar and water, covered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring once. Roll one third of the dough to a 30 × 10cm / 12 × 4in rectangle and cut in three squares. Place two apricot halves on each and fold two opposite corners to the centre.*

Roll *a second third of dough to the same size and cut in three squares. Make 2.5cm / 1in diagonal cuts from each corner. Place a third of the marzipan in the centre of each square and fold alternate corners into the centre, pressing into the marzipan.*

Roll *remaining dough to a rectangle 23 × 12.5cm / 9 × 5in. Cut into three. Mix nuts, honey and cinnamon. Spoon a third on to each piece and fold in half, lengthways. Seal edges and make cuts from the folded edge. Brush with syrup. Rise for 20 minutes.*

Arrange *three pastries at a time in a circle in the cooker on a piece of greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes. Brush with syrup again and brown the tops quickly under a hot grill, making sure the sugary surface does not burn.*

Repeat *the procedure with the rest of the pastries in two more batches. Do not wait for the outsides to look cooked — the insides will be overcooked. Mix the icing sugar and water and spoon over the wheels. Decorate wheels with a glacé cherry.*

Microtips

When microwaving Danish pastries, remember that sugar and butter attract microwave energy more than other ingredients, so take care with this very rich mixture. The sugar syrup and the honey and nut filling mixture will get very hot during microwaving, and may burn from the inside. Check the pastries several times during cooking and do not leave them unattended in the cooker. If the pastries seem to be burning, stop microwaving immediately and remove them from the cooker; leave to stand to complete cooking.

Vegetables from frozen 2

Frozen vegetables are extremely convenient — so make the most of them. With a pinch of imagination plus high-speed microwave cooking you can perk up these familiar ingredients to make extra-tasty fare.

Frozen vegetables are a staple standby these days and with fast, fuss-free microwave cooking, they can be even more tasty and versatile than ever. Remember, though, that over-cooking produces unappetizing, soggy vegetables. So test frequently and stop microwaving as soon as they are just tender.

Ringing the changes

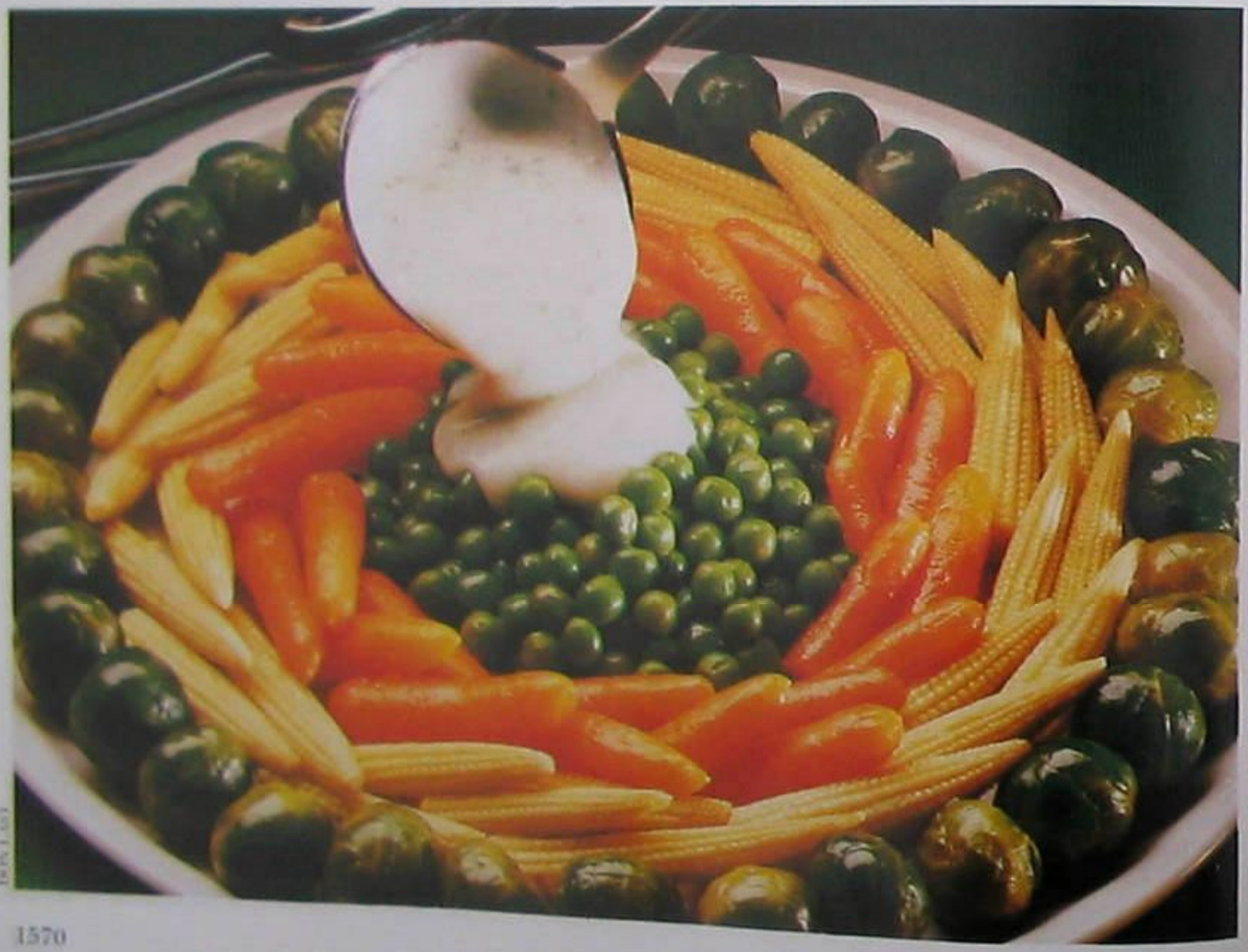
Lightly cooked, buttered vegetables are simply delicious, but can become dull if served all the time. It's easy to introduce variety by combining different frozen, canned or fresh ingredients.

Any combination of frozen vegetables can be tried, but check the chart in Part 33, page 907, to find out which vegetables take longest to cook. Start with the slower-cooking vegetables, adding the others after a couple of minutes, depending on how much faster they cook. Bear in mind that a greater quantity of vegetables takes longer to cook in the microwave. So, if sweetcorn is added to cauliflower, for example, both vegetables take longer to cook than when on their own.

Fresh and canned vegetables can also be added to frozen ones. Canned vegetables need only be added towards the end of cooking to heat through. Alternatively, add a more unusual ingredient such as bean sprouts or nuts, for extra interest and texture.

Using herbs is another quick and easy way to turn a familiar vegetable into a more interesting accompaniment. Other tasty ideas include cooking vegetables in a soup (see Zesty Carrots) or topping them with a golden cheese sauce (see Vegetables Mornay). There is no need for frozen vegetables to become dull or 'samey' — start with the recipes here, then experiment with your own ideas.

Below: *Vegetable Platter*
Above right: *Zesty Carrots*
Right: *Piquant Mixed Vegetables*



Zesty carrots

15 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this spicy vegetable accompaniment hot with a traditional shepherd's or meat pie, or cold with a selection of cold meats.

300g / 10.6oz can condensed tomato soup
½ small onion, finely chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
454g / 1lb packet frozen crinkle-cut carrots or extra fine cut baby carrots
salt

SERVES 6

1 Combine the soup, onion, green pepper and Worcestershire sauce in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Stir in the carrots.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-17 minutes, or until tender-crisp, stirring once. Season to taste. Serve hot or cold.

Piquant mixed vegetables

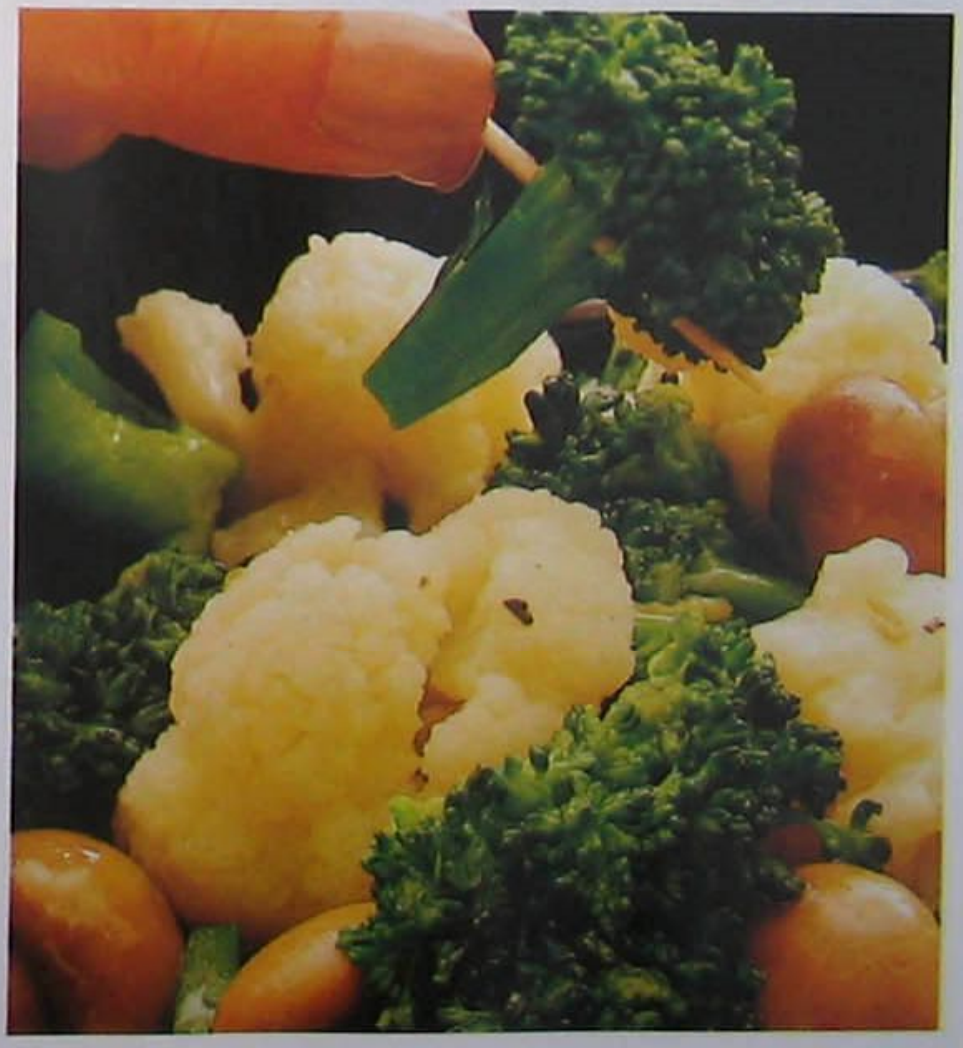
10 mins

Standing time: none

300g / 10.6oz packet frozen broccoli florets
300g / 10.6oz packet frozen cauliflower florets
213g / 7½oz can button mushrooms, drained
75ml / 5tbls bottled French salad dressing
1 small green pepper, seeded and cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces

SERVES 6

1 Place the frozen broccoli and cauliflower in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until thoroughly heated and slightly tender, stirring once.
2 Add the mushrooms, dressing and green pepper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until all the vegetables are heated through and the green pepper is tender-crisp.



Vegetable platter

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb frozen baby Brussels sprouts
225 / 8oz frozen whole baby sweetcorn
225g / 8oz frozen whole baby carrots
100g / 4oz frozen peas
45ml / 3tbls water

SAUCE
275ml / ½pt milk
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
15g / ½oz butter
pinch of grated nutmeg
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Arrange the sprouts around the edge of a 25cm / 10in plate. Place the sweetcorn in a circle inside the sprouts, then the carrots and finally the peas in the centre. Sprinkle with the water.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 16-17 minutes, or until all the vegetables are just tender, rotating plate a quarter turn three times. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
3 To make the sauce: whisk the milk, flour and butter together in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, whisking three times, until thickened. Stir in the remaining ingredients to taste.
4 Uncover the vegetables and pour over the sauce to serve.

Buttered corn

12 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

4 × 200g / 7oz frozen corn-on-the-cob
50g / 2oz butter, at room temperature
salt, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Place the frozen corn-on-the-cob in a roasting bag and close the top loosely with a rubber band.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, or until the corn is tender, turning the cobs and bag every 5 minutes. Leave to stand for 2-3 minutes.
3 Slit the roasting bag and remove the cobs. Spread thickly with the butter. Serve the corn immediately, with the salt handed separately.

VARIATION
Buttered corn for two: microwave two cobs in a bag for 7-9 minutes. Microwave 25g / 1oz butter for 15-30 seconds. Serve as above.

Above: *Buttered Corn*
Below: *Crispy Vegetables*

Microtips

Microwaving corn-on-the-cob in a roasting bag gives deliciously moist, juicy results. Stand well back when slitting open the bag to avoid the steam.

Cook's notes

Frozen vegetables tend to stick to the base of containers. To prevent this, add other ingredients first, if possible.

Crispy vegetables

10 mins

Standing time: none

A large browning dish is needed to hold all the vegetables.

10ml / 2tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
pinch of garlic powder
pinch of ground ginger
200g / 7.5oz packet frozen mange tout
227g / 8oz can sliced water chestnuts, drained
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced
2 spring onions, chopped
knob of butter or margarine
25g / 1oz cashew nuts

SERVES 4-6

1 Blend the cornflour and soy sauce together in a large bowl. Add the garlic and ginger.
2 Pierce the packet of mange tout and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2 minutes. Open the bag and empty the mange tout into the soy sauce mixture. Stir in the remaining vegetables.
3 Pre-heat a 25cm / 10in browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the butter and tilt the dish to coat the base. Add the vegetable mixture, stirring to prevent sticking.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until tender-crisp, stirring once. Stir in the cashew nuts and serve.

Courgettes Parmesan

6 mins

Standing time: none

This is a simply delicious way to serve cooked frozen broccoli, cauliflower or mixed vegetables as well as courgettes. For microwaving times, see the chart in Part 33, page 907.

450g / 1lb frozen sliced courgettes
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the courgettes in a 20cm / 8in round dish and dot with the butter. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, separating the slices halfway through if necessary. Microwave for a further 2 minutes, or until tender but still crisp; drain.
2 In a small bowl, combine the cheese, parsley and salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle over the courgettes before serving.

Below: *Courgettes Parmesan*

Italian Brussels sprouts

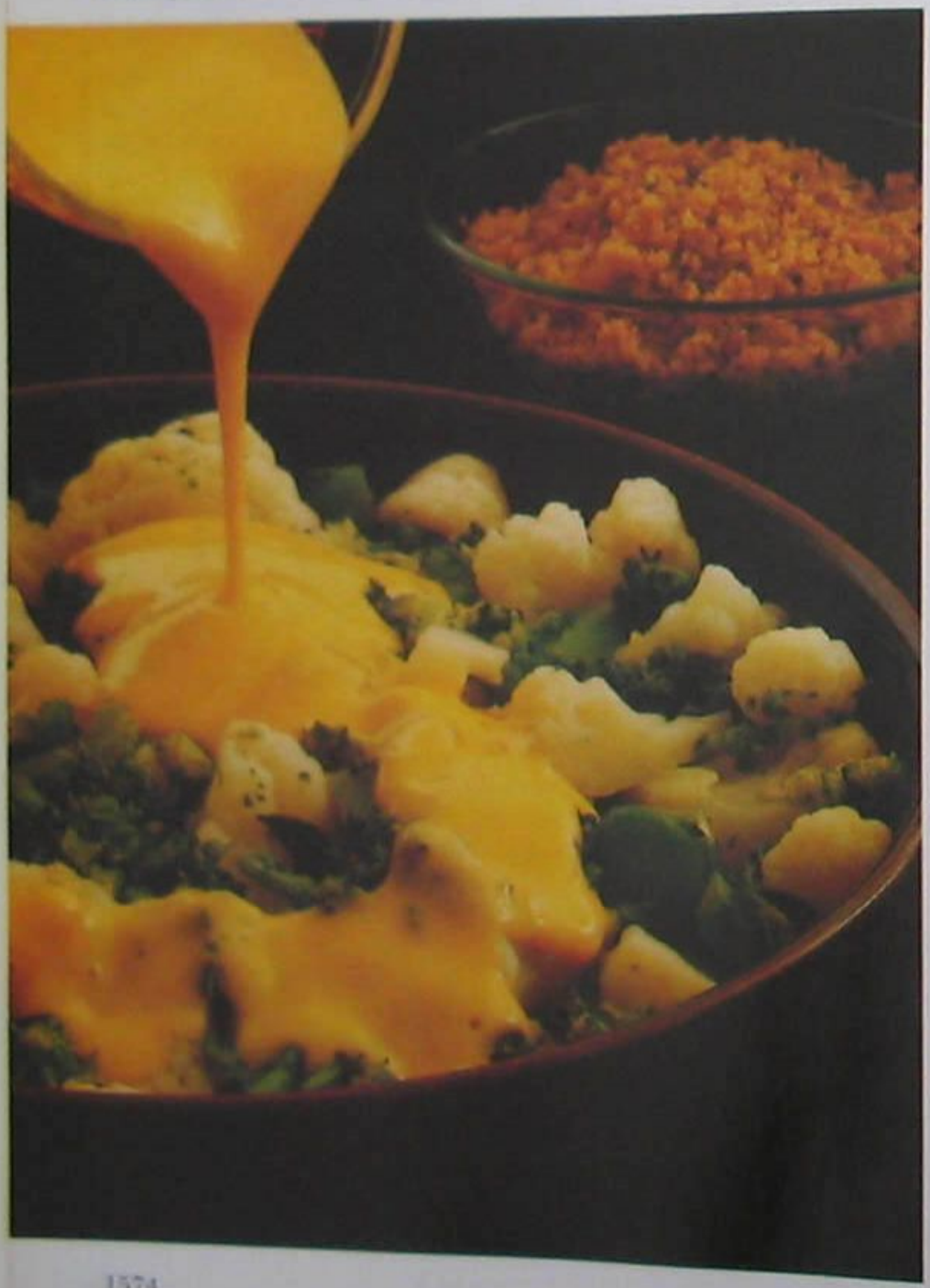
9 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

2 × 227g / 8oz packets frozen baby Brussels sprouts
30ml / 2tbls water
4 spring onions (white bulbs only), sliced
25g / 1oz butter
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
pinch of dried basil
pinch of dried oregano
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine the Brussels sprouts and water in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until tender-crisp, stirring once. Stand, covered, for 3 minutes.
2 Place the onions and butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the onion is tender. Stir in the remaining ingredients.
3 Drain the sprouts and return to the casserole or place in a microwave serving dish. Pour over the onion mixture, stirring to coat. If necessary, microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to heat.



Vegetables mornay

11¾ mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
135ml / 9tbls dried breadcrumbs
300g / 10.6oz packet frozen broccoli spears, roughly chopped
300g / 10.6oz packet frozen cauliflower florets
30ml / 2tbls water

MORNAY SAUCE
225ml / ½pt milk
25g / 1oz plain flour
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
pinch of mustard powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Melt the butter at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds in a small, covered dish. Stir in the crumbs.
2 Combine the broccoli, cauliflower and water in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, or until tender, stirring once or twice. Drain well, cover and set aside.
3 For the sauce: combine milk and flour in a jug; add the butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, whisking twice.
4 Stir in the cheese, mustard and seasoning until smoothly blended. Pour over the vegetables and sprinkle with the breadcrumbs.

Left: *Vegetables Mornay*
Above left: *Italian Brussels Sprouts*

Spanish salad

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

400g / 14oz frozen whole asparagus
60ml / 4tbls lemon juice
½ iceberg or crispy lettuce
4 tomatoes, quartered
50g / 2oz cans anchovy fillets, drained and rinsed
6 black olives, sliced
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan
120ml / 8tbls olive oil
20ml / 4tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the asparagus and lemon juice in a dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, rotating half a turn once. Stand for 5 minutes; cool.
2 Arrange the lettuce and tomato on a plate. Top with asparagus, anchovies, olives and Parmesan.
3 Combine oil, lemon juice and seasoning and pour over salad.

Vegetable medley

5 mins

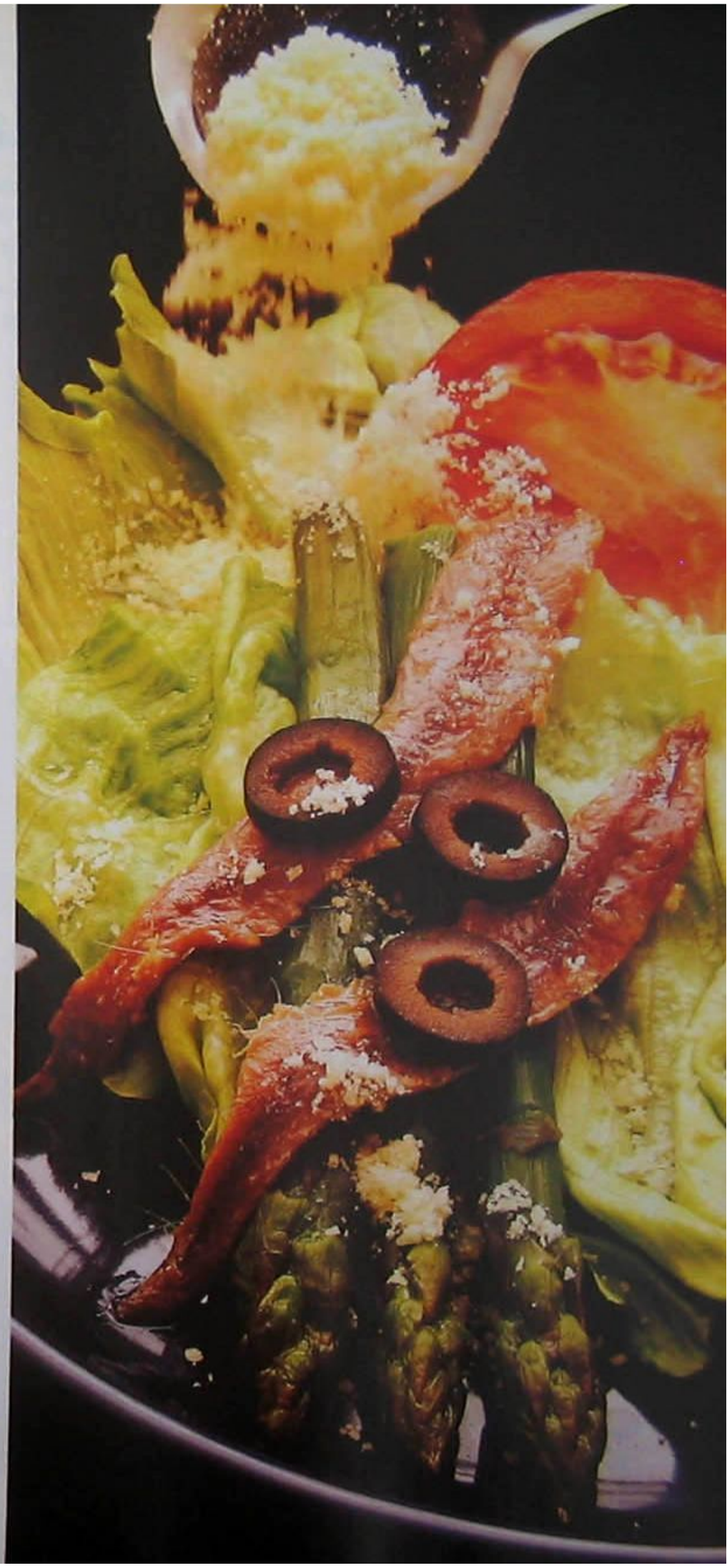
Standing time: none

100g / 4oz green beans, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
juice of half a lemon
283g / 10oz packet frozen stir-fry vegetables
5ml / 1tsp Chinese five spice powder
100g / 4oz fresh beansprouts, soaked in cold water for 10 minutes, drained

SERVES 4

1 Place the green beans, butter and lemon juice in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring once.
2 Add the stir-fry vegetables and five spice, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.
3 Add the beansprouts and microwave for 2-3 minutes.

Spanish Salad



Savoury fun snacks

For a quick bite after school or a spur of the moment nibble, microwaving is child's play — so why not let the family join in and help cook their own super, speedy snacks?

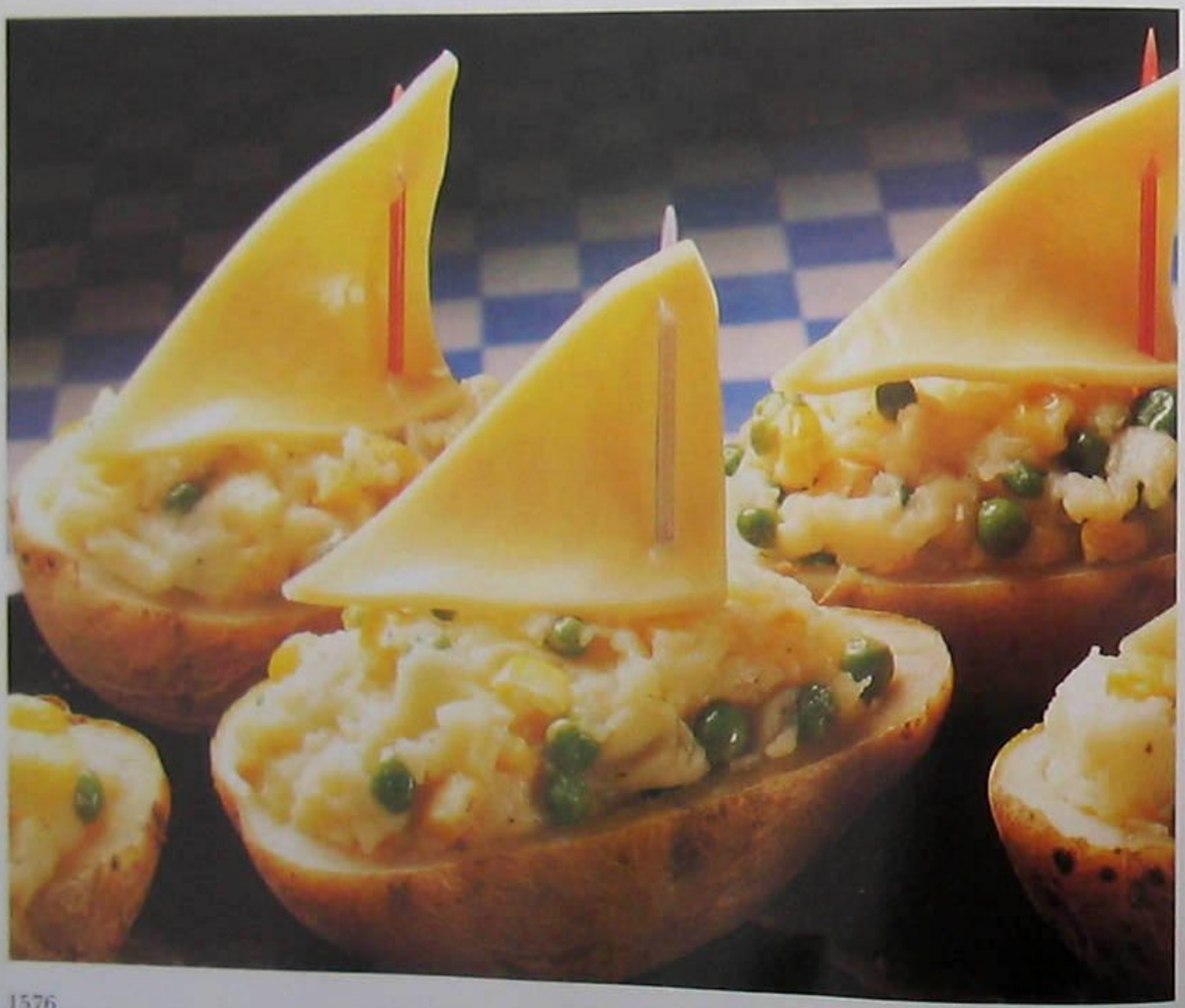
With your microwave you can prepare quick and easy titbits for the whole family or, better still, let them prepare their own.

Cooking with a microwave is safer than conventional cooking, and children appreciate instant microwave results. However, before you let them loose in the kitchen, make sure that anyone unfamiliar with microwaving is aware of a few safety precautions.

Sailor's Spuds (recipe page 1580)

Microwave reminders

- Always use oven gloves when taking food out of the microwave. Heat is transferred from the food to the containers and these can sometimes get very hot.
- Always remove covers and stretch wrap with oven gloves. When using stretch wrap, start removing it from the side furthest away and pull it towards you.
- Never use metal containers or utensils in the microwave.
- If using greaseproof or absorbent paper to cover food, remove it after microwaving or it may stick to the food.
- Whole potatoes, apples, sausages and so on — anything cooked in a skin, casing or plastic bag — must be pricked all over to prevent it bursting.



Fun burgers

7½ mins

Standing time: 3–4 mins

1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, grated
1 garlic clove, crushed
450g / 1lb minced beef
2 egg whites
50g / 2oz rolled oats
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika
pinch of cayenne
10 wooden skewers or sticks

COATING
17g / ¾oz cornflakes, crushed
pinch of paprika
pinch of cayenne

MUSTARD DIP
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
30ml / 2tbls natural yoghurt
15ml / 1tbls made mustard
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley

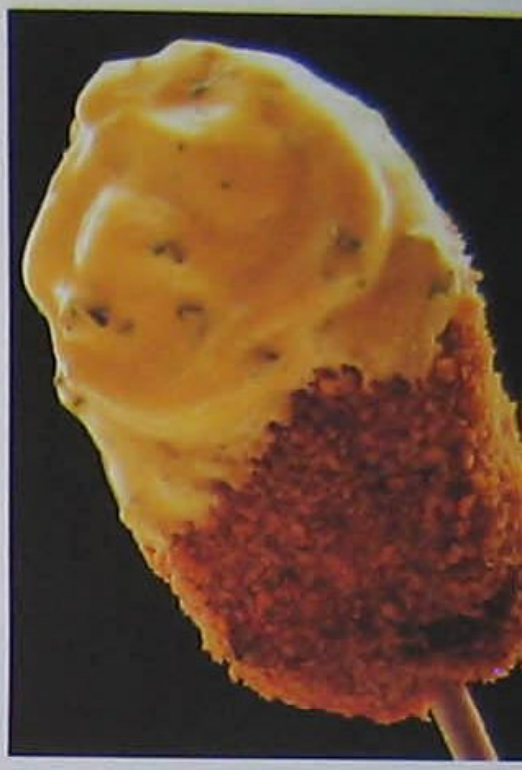
MAKES 10

Cook's notes

Try using minced turkey for the beef in Fun Burgers, and serve them with cranberry jelly or sweet and sour sauce.

Microtips

To ensure even cooking in the microwave, thicker portions of meat are placed towards the outside of the dish.



How to microwave Fun burgers

Combine *onion, carrot and garlic in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½–2½ minutes, or until just tender.*

Add *mince, egg whites, oats, ketchup or sauce and spices. Mix well and divide into 10 equal portions. Shape into 7.5cm / 3in oval patties.*

Insert *a wooden skewer into each burger. Mix crushed cornflakes, paprika and cayenne and spread on a sheet of greaseproof paper.*

Roll *each burger in the cornflake mixture and coat both sides evenly. Arrange on a roasting rack with skewers towards the centre.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 6–8 minutes, or until burgers are firm and cooked through. Rotate rack once. Stand for 3–4 minutes.*

Blend *cottage cheese and yoghurt in a processor or blender until smooth. Add mustard and parsley. Serve the burgers with the dip.*

Cheesy popcorn

1 min

Standing time: none

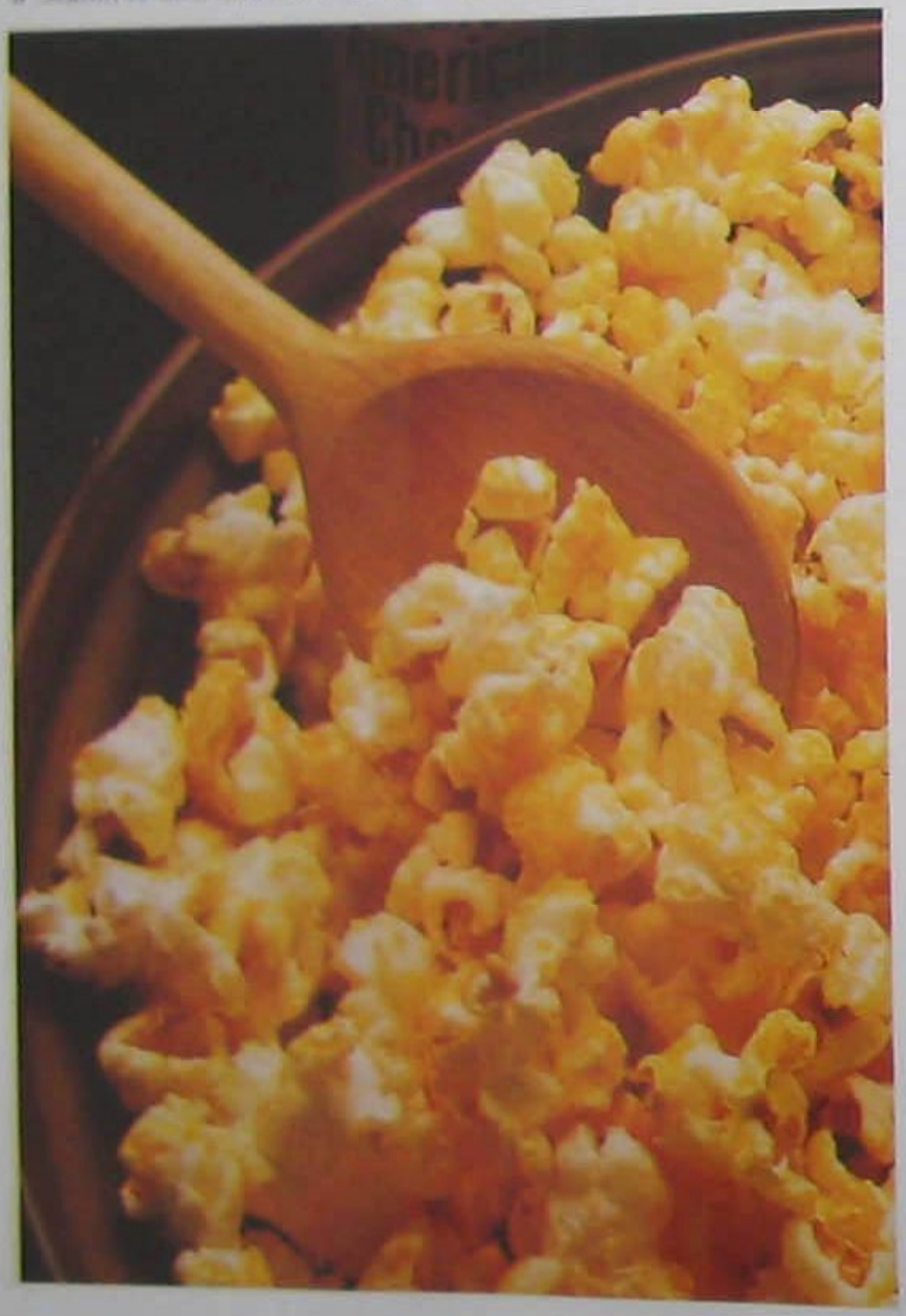
75g / 3oz raw popcorn, popped
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
50g / 2oz Parmesan cheese, grated
salt to taste

SERVES 4

1 Mix popcorn with cheeses in a large bowl and toss together well.
2 Microwave popcorn at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until warmed through. Stir well halfway through cooking time.
3 Season to taste and serve warm.

Cook's notes

You can pop the corn in the microwave — but only if you have a special corn popper (see Part 20, back cover).



Tangy chicken with slaw dip

10 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

900g / 2lb chicken wings
30ml / 2tbls muscovado sugar
15ml / 1tbls cider vinegar
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
60ml / 4tbls tomato ketchup or sauce

DIP
225g / 8oz coleslaw
30ml / 2tbls natural yoghurt
salt and pepper

SERVES 6-8

1 Cut off wing tips and halve wings at joints. Arrange in a single layer in a large shallow dish.
2 Mix together the sugar, vinegar, soy sauce and tomato ketchup. Spoon mixture over wings.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes. Turn and brush with marinade. Stand 3 minutes.
4 Purée coleslaw, yoghurt and seasoning in a blender until smooth. Pour into a bowl and place on a large plate. Arrange chicken around bowl. Serve hot.

Above: *Tangy Chicken*
Left: *Cheesy Popcorn*

Sausage slices

13½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

225g / 8oz sausagemeat
4 eggs
1 onion, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls milk
45-60ml / 3-4tbls mayonnaise
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz red Leicester or Cheddar cheese, grated
10ml / 2tsp chopped chives

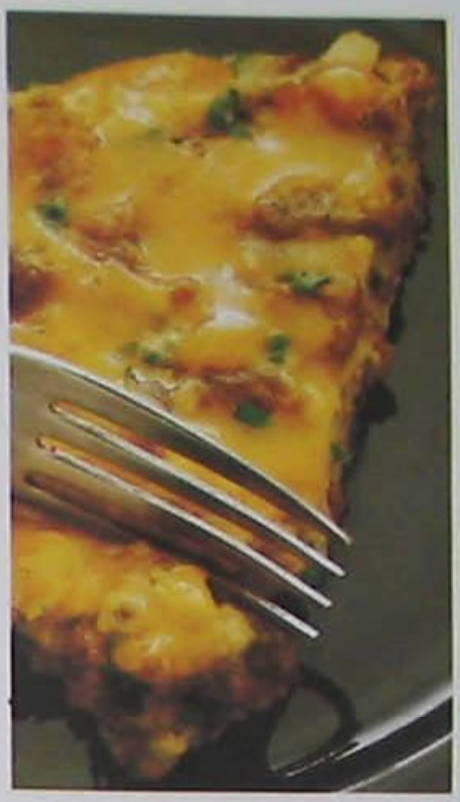
SERVES 4

1 Press sausagemeat over base of a 23cm / 9in round dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Break meat up with a fork, stir well and microwave for 1 minute at 100% (High), or use a browning dish (see Microtips).
2 Combine eggs, onion, milk, mayonnaise and seasoning. Pour on to sausagemeat and mix well. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4 minutes; stir from outside to centre, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-4½ minutes, until almost set.
3 Mix grated cheese with chives and sprinkle over sausagemeat mixture. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes, or until cheese melts.
4 Stand for 2-3 minutes. Serve.

Sausage slices for two: halve the ingredients. Divide sausagemeat between two plates. Microwave together for 2½ minutes. Break up meat and microwave for a further 1 minute. Divide other ingredients, mix well and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3 minutes. Stir and microwave for a further 3-3½ minutes. Sprinkle with grated cheese and microwave for 1½-2 minutes. Stand 2 minutes.

Microtips

Pre-heat browning dish for 5 minutes or as directed. Brown meat for 4 minutes at 100% (High). Stir once. Drain; transfer to 23cm / 9in round dish and continue from Stage 2.



Quickie kebabs

4 mins

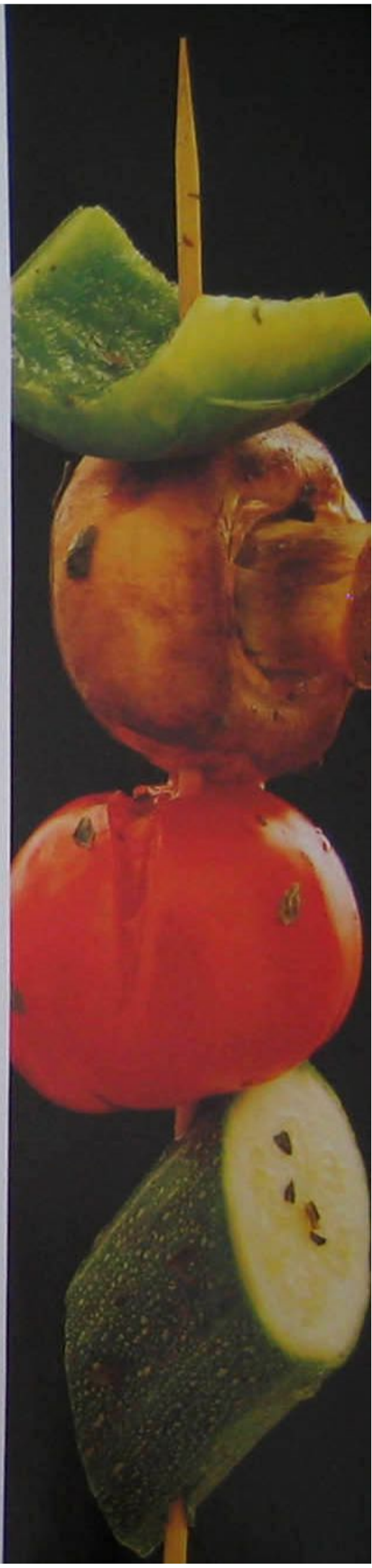
Standing time: none

½ green pepper, seeded and cut into eight chunks
8 button mushrooms
8 cherry tomatoes
2 courgettes, cut into eight chunks
150ml / ¼pt stock
45ml / 3tbls cider vinegar
salt and pepper to taste
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried marjoram
bay leaf
8 wooden skewers

SERVES 4

1 Thread the green pepper, mushrooms, tomatoes and courgettes on to wooden skewers.
2 Combine stock, vinegar, seasoning and herbs and pour into a large, shallow dish. Arrange kebabs in dish.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until vegetables are just tender; turn kebabs over once.
4 Serve with hot pitta bread.

Above: *Sausage Slices*
Right: *Quickie Kebabs*



Stuffed tomatoes

11 mins

Standing time: none

4 large tomatoes (weighing about 100g / 4oz each)
2-3 small potatoes (weighing 350g / 12oz), thinly sliced
1 small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls water
225g / 8oz cottage cheese, sieved
45ml / 3tbls milk
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
1 carrot, grated

SERVES 4

1 Slice off the top of each tomato, 12mm / ½in from the stem end. Scoop out pulp and leave the shells upside down, to drain.
2 Mix together potatoes, onion and water in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.
3 Add cottage cheese, milk, herbs, seasoning and carrot to potato and onion mixture and mix well.
4 Turn tomato shells over and fill with cheese and potato mixture. Arrange tomatoes in a ring around the edge of a large plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until heated through. Rearrange tomatoes once.

Sailor's spuds

16 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 × 225g / 8oz oval-shaped baking potatoes, scrubbed and pricked
25g / 1oz butter
50g / 2oz frozen petit pois
50g / 2oz frozen sweetcorn
50g / 2oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper
4 slices processed cheese
8 cocktail sticks

MAKES 8

1 Arrange the potatoes on a sheet of absorbent paper in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes, turning them over and rearranging them halfway through cooking. Wrap in foil and stand for 5 minutes.
2 Cut potatoes in half lengthways and scoop out the flesh. Reserve the shells.
3 Mash potato flesh with butter. Add petit pois, sweetcorn and cheese and season to taste. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Stir once during cooking and again at end of time.
4 Fill potato shells with vegetable and cheese mixture. Arrange in a ring on a large plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, or until heated through.

Stuffed Tomatoes

5 Cut processed cheese squares into triangles. Fix each triangle to a cocktail stick to form a sail.
6 Place one sail on each potato 'boat' and serve.

Tasty toasties

9 mins

Standing time: none

4 rashers streaky bacon, chopped
4 tomatoes, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
4 slices bread, toasted and buttered
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Place bacon, tomatoes, onion, green pepper, garlic and herbs in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until onion is softened. Drain well.
2 Lay toast on a double sheet of absorbent paper and divide tomato mixture between each slice.
3 Sprinkle cheese evenly over toast and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until cheese melts, turning once.

Cooked salads

Cook up a super salad in your microwave — colours stay bright and textures are crisp and appetizing. There's a cooked salad here for every occasion and it can be ready to eat in less than 15 minutes.

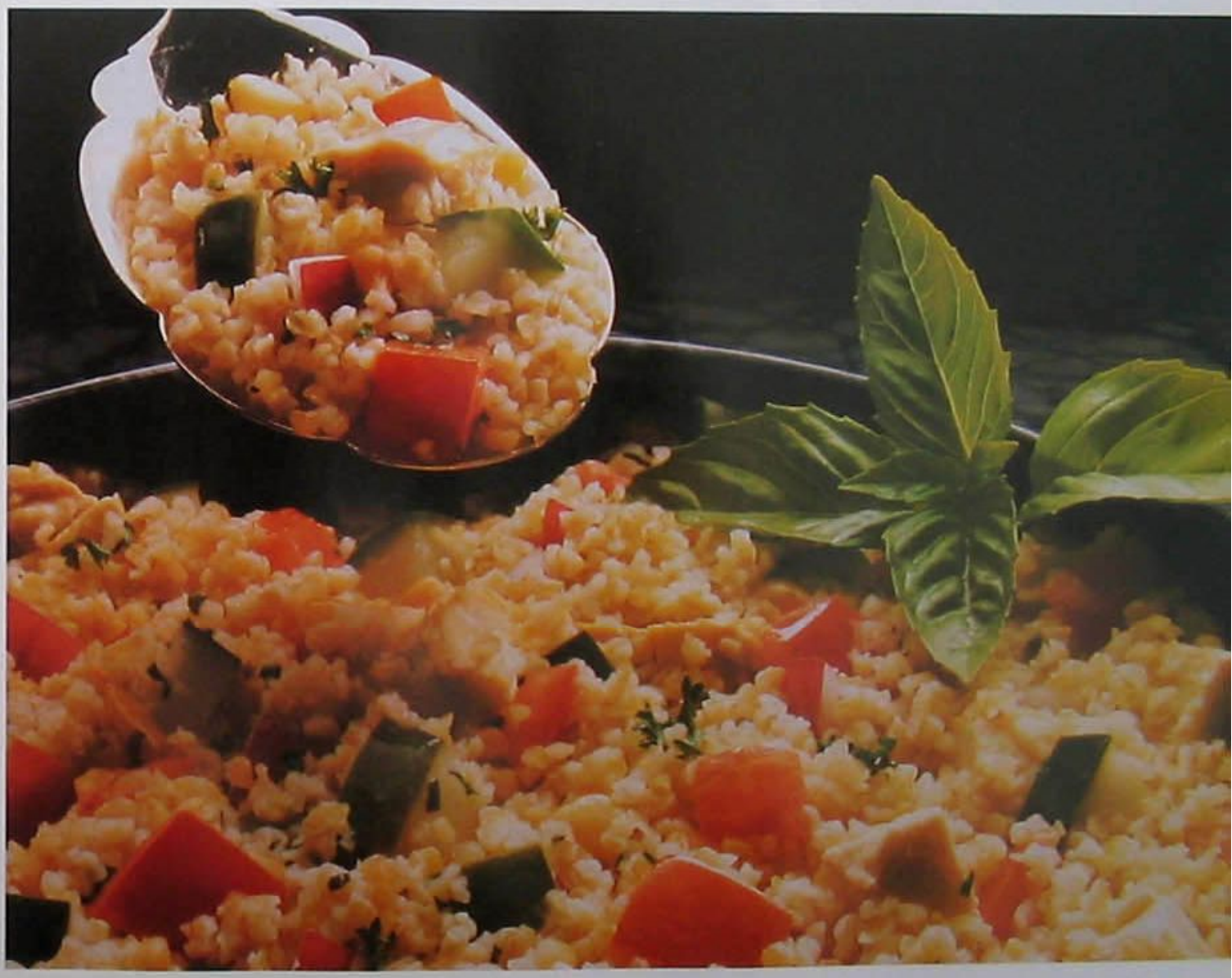
Whether hot or cold, as a main dish or side dish, salads are always a welcome, colourful addition to a meal. For a snack lunch with friends, a speedy mid-week supper or an accompaniment to a dinner party dish, you'll find it handy to have a few tasty salads at your fingertips.

Vegetables make a good base for a cooked salad and microwaving is the ideal method of cooking them as it retains their colour, flavour and texture beautifully. For a successful cooked salad, it is essential that the vegetables keep their crisp crunchy texture. To avoid overcooked, flabby ingredients test at the end of the minimum microwaving time, then continue cooking, if necessary, until they are just fork-tender.

A tasty sauce or mayonnaise gives a rich creaminess to salads, and can be flavoured with herbs and seasonings to suit individual dishes. Mayonnaise is useful as it is just as good served hot or cold. Add delicate ingredients such as grapes at the last minute to keep them at their best.

The dressing binds the salad vegetables together — and adds flavour. It can be a sauce, marinade, vinaigrette or mayonnaise. The dressing should coat the ingredients without swamping them. Add it to the salad while it's still hot so it has a good chance to soak up the flavour.

Summer Salad



Summer salad

7 mins

Standing time: none

This is the perfect salad for a mid-week summer supper. Serve cold with a green salad. Store any left-overs in the refrigerator.

175g / 6oz bulgar or cracked wheat
700ml / 1¼pt boiling water
2 × 175g / 6oz boneless chicken breasts, skinned
½ cucumber, seeded and chopped
1 small red onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
40g / 1½oz butter
30ml / 2tbls pine nuts
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
pinch of garlic salt
1 tomato, seeded and chopped

SERVES 6

1 Place the bulgar or cracked wheat in a bowl and pour over the boiling water. Cover and leave to soak for 30 minutes. Drain and press out excess moisture; set aside.
2 Place the chicken breasts on a roasting rack. Cover with grease-proof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the chicken is no longer pink, turning over once. Set aside.
3 In a casserole, combine the cucumber, onion, parsley, butter, nuts, oil, vinegar, basil and garlic salt, mixing well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the cucumber is translucent, stirring once.
4 Cut the chicken into 12mm / ½in cubes and add to the casserole with the tomato, bulgar and salt to taste. Chill before serving.

Slimmer's notes

Omit the butter and this salad makes a really tasty addition to the slimmer's menu at just 215Cal / 905kJ per portion. It is perfect as a lunch or supper dish, served with a mixed green salad.

Above: *Minted Potato Salad*
Right: *Courgette Salad*

Courgette salad

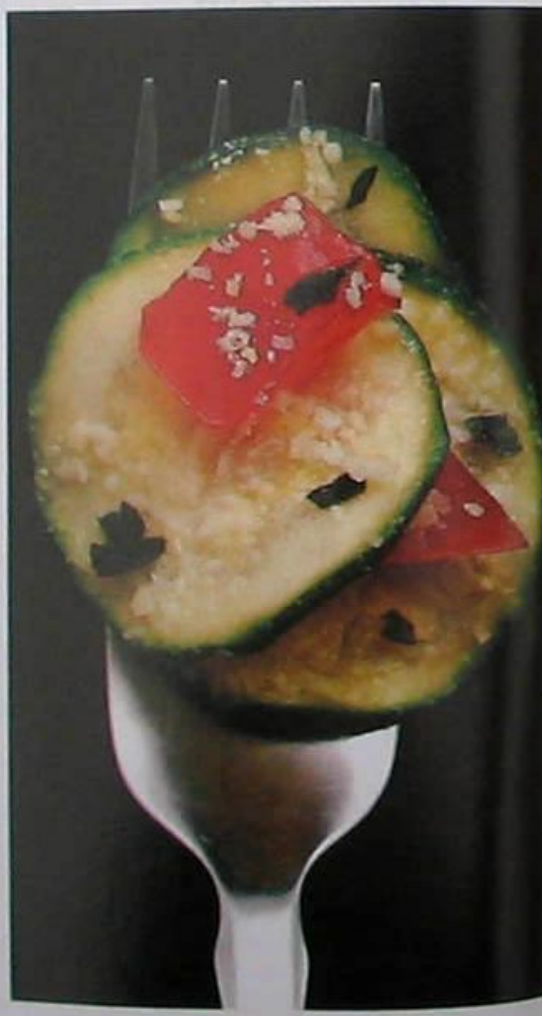
6 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

225g / 8oz courgettes, thinly sliced
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
knob of butter or margarine
275g / 10oz tomatoes, chopped
salt
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 In a 1.1L / 2pt casserole, combine the courgettes, basil and butter. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
2 Stir in the tomatoes and salt. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the courgettes are tender.
3 Sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese and let stand, covered, for 3-5 minutes, or until the cheese melts. Serve warm or cold.



Minted potato salad

6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
60-90ml / 4-6tbls water
125ml / 4fl oz soured cream
salt and pepper
4 spring onions, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
5ml / 1tsp chopped mint or 2.5ml / ½tsp dried

SERVES 4

1 Place the potatoes and water in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until tender. Drain, return to the casserole and stand, covered, for 3 minutes.
2 Season the soured cream with salt and pepper and carefully stir into the potatoes with the onions, celery and mint.
3 Allow to cool, then chill. Or, microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes to serve hot.

Honey beets

4 mins

Standing time: none

10ml / 2tsp cornflour
salt and pepper
pinch of ground ginger
30ml / 2tbls honey
30ml / 2tbls white wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
454g / 1lb jar pickled baby beetroot, drained with 45ml / 3tbls juice reserved

SERVES 4-6

1 In a small bowl, combine all the ingredients except the beetroots. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until thick and clear, stirring every 30 seconds.
2 Slice the beetroots into a 1.1L / 2pt casserole and pour over the hot dressing. Continue microwaving for 2-3 minutes, or until hot. Serve hot or cold.

Right: *Honey Beets*
Below: *Broccoli and Carrot Salad*

Broccoli and carrot salad

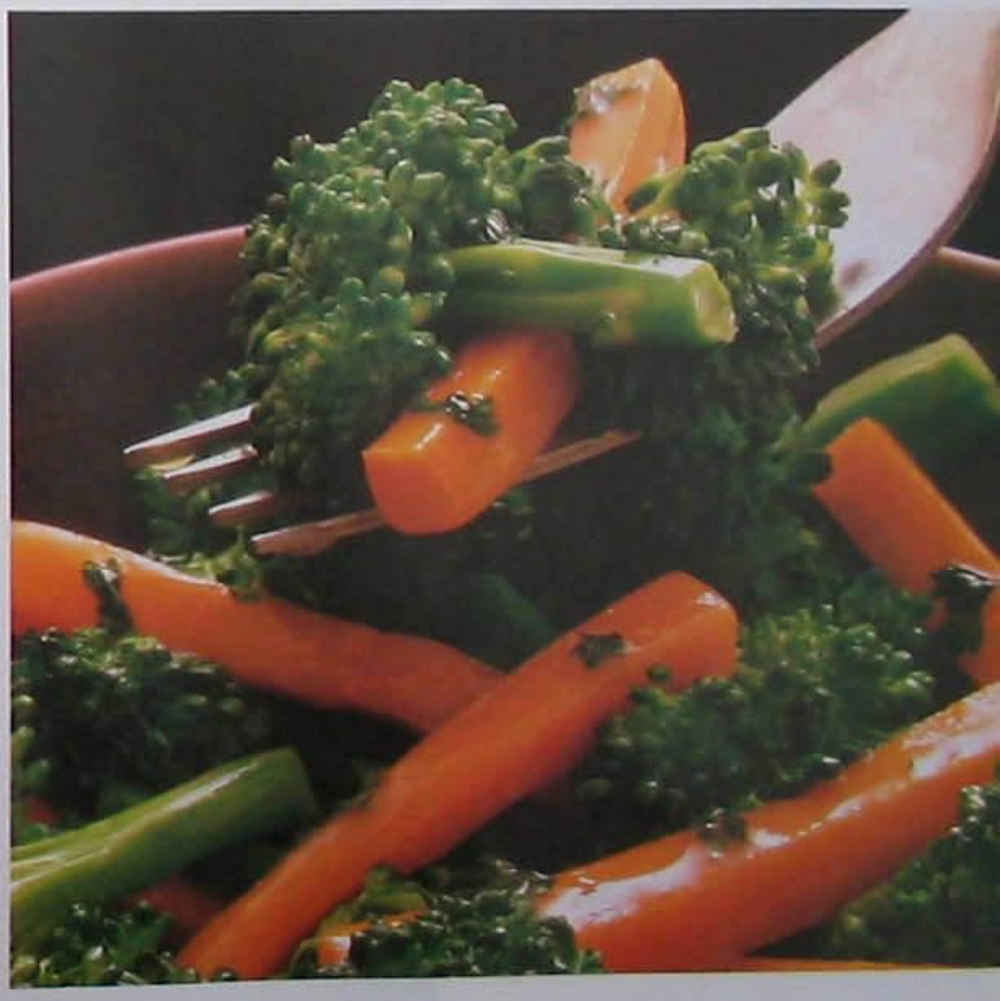
2⅓ mins

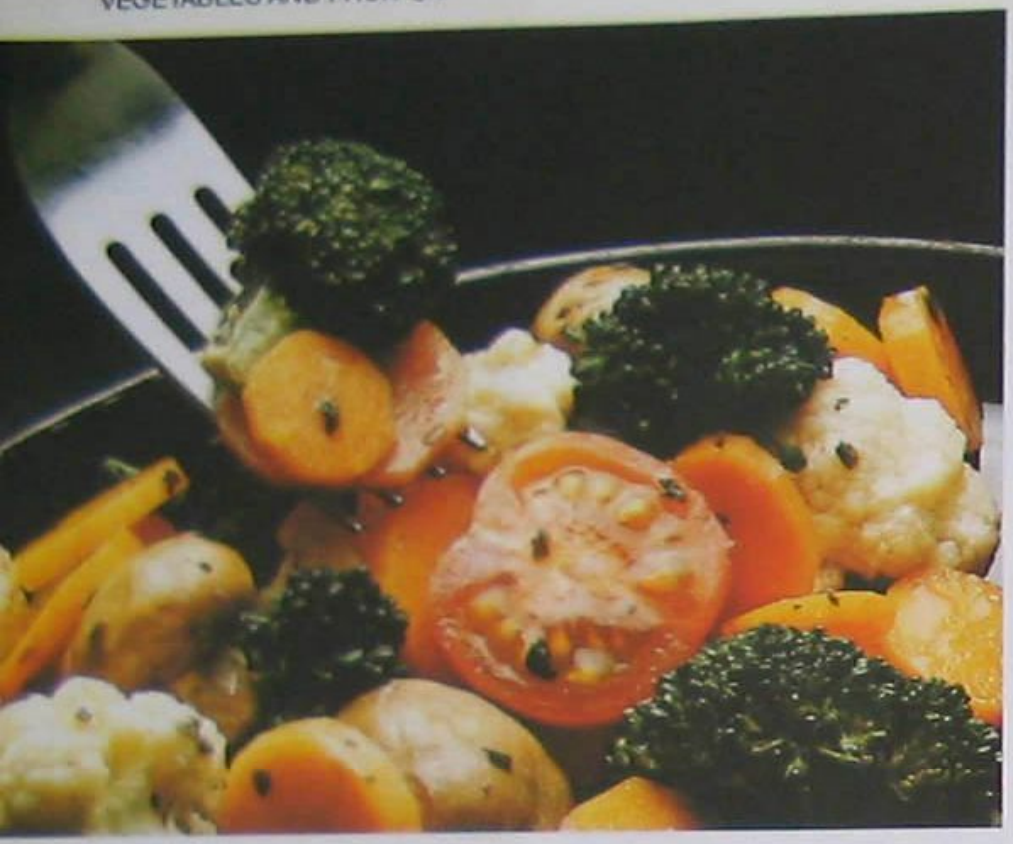
Standing time: 2 mins

100g / 4oz broccoli
2 carrots, cut into thin strips, 5cm / 2in long
15ml / 1tbls water
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 2

1 Cut the broccoli into small florets, each with 5cm / 2in stalk. Place the florets, carrot strips and water in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes or until the vegetables are tender-crisp, stirring once. Drain and leave to stand, covered, for 2 minutes.
2 In a small bowl, mix together the oil and parsley and season well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds. Pour over the vegetables and toss well. Serve at room temperature or allow to chill in the refrigerator.





Left: *Marinated Vegetables*
Below left: *Hot Chicken Salad*

Marinated vegetables

3½ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz broccoli florets
225g / 8oz cauliflower florets
1 large carrot, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls water
225g / 8oz button mushrooms
4 cherry tomatoes, halved

MARINADE
125ml / 4fl oz white wine or cider vinegar
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small onion, sliced
45ml / 3tbls vegetable or olive oil
7.5ml / 1½tsp sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 For the marinade: put the vinegar into a small bowl together with the garlic and onion. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until the bowl is just warm to the touch. Cover and leave for several hours to allow the garlic to flavour the vinegar.
2 Strain the vinegar into a clean bowl and add the remaining marinade ingredients; set aside.
3 Combine the broccoli, cauliflower and carrots in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Add the water and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the vegetables are just tender and colours are vibrant, stirring after 2 minutes; drain.
4 Add the mushrooms and tomatoes. Stir the marinade and pour over the vegetables. Cover and refrigerate for 3-4 hours.

Hot chicken salad

7 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
450g / 1lb cooked chicken, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
50g / 2oz flaked almonds
25g / 1oz croûtons
30ml / 2tbls strong chicken stock
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls water
dash of chilli or Tabasco sauce
½ iceberg lettuce, shredded
small bunch of seedless green grapes

SERVES 6

1 Place the onion, green pepper and butter in a casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender-crisp.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients except the lettuce and grapes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until heated through, stirring once.
3 Stir in the lettuce and grapes and serve hot.

Microtips

Hot Chicken Salad can be prepared in advance up to the end of stage 2. Refrigerate until needed.

To serve, microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, then stir in the lettuce and grapes.

Vegetable side salad

7½ mins

Standing time: none

Yellow courgettes provide a splash of bright colour in this dish, but green courgettes can be used instead. Serve with cold meats.

275g / 10oz packet frozen green beans
225g / 8oz yellow or green courgettes, sliced
30ml / 2tbls water

DRESSING
30ml / 2tbls sunflower oil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried parsley
pinch of dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp onion salt
pinch of garlic salt
pinch of pepper

SERVES 6

1 In a 1.7L / 3pt bowl or casserole, combine the beans, courgette slices and water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender-crisp, stirring twice. Set aside.
2 In a small bowl, combine the dressing ingredients. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 30-45 seconds.
3 Drain the vegetables and pour over the flavoured dressing, stirring to coat the vegetables. Serve at room temperature.

Slimmer's notes

There are no adjustments needed to this recipe to make it a super slimmer's side salad. It provides just 45Cal/190kJ per serving.

Right: *Vegetable Mayonnaise*
Below: *Vegetable Side Salad*

Vegetable mayonnaise

12 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

450g / 1lb green beans, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths
75ml / 5tbls water
75ml / 5tbls lemon mayonnaise
150ml / ¼pt single cream
227g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
45ml / 3tbls milk
213g / 7½oz can sliced mushrooms, drained
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp vinegar
salt and pepper

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the beans and water in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, or until tender, stirring once. Stand, covered, for 1-2 minutes, then drain.
2 Stir in the mayonnaise, single cream, water chestnuts, milk, mushrooms, soy sauce and vinegar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until heated through, stirring once. Stir and check the seasoning. Serve warm.

Dining in style~at home

Now that it's your turn to entertain, why not try this suprisingly simple menu? It's so elegant to serve, and as the microwave does all the work you'll have time to sit back and enjoy the compliments.

If you're tired of spending the evening in the kitchen while your guests relax in comfort, serve this highly practical and deceptively simple microwave menu.

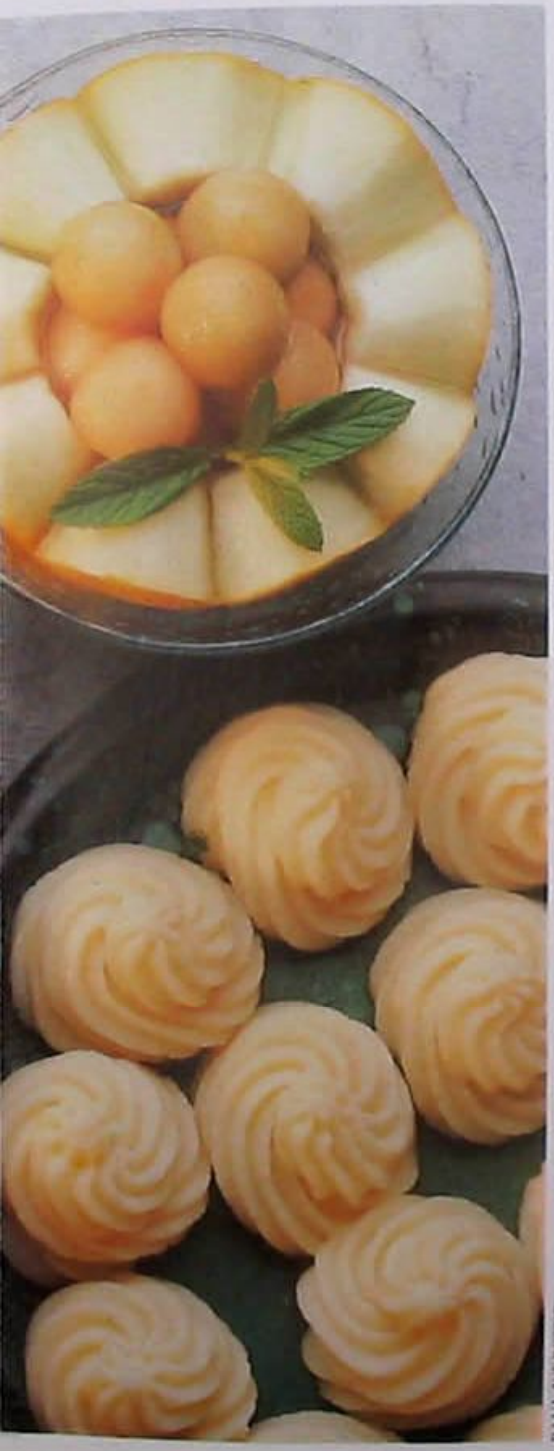
Prepared in advance and served cold, the light and exotic Tipsy Melon starter sets the pace for an enjoyable evening. Hot on its heels the main dish — a handsome duo of mullet — always wins admiration. All you have to do is reheat it and add the final touches of decortion, then warm the accompaniments — a tangy dish of Lemony Potatoes and a piquant Red Butter Sauce — before serving.

And then what better way to end

the perfect evening than with Hot Brie with Crackers — although it's simplicity itself, it's unusual and interesting too.

Cook's notes

Score a line around the waist of each melon with a small sharp knife. Using it as a guide, cut a wavy line around the melon, cutting right through to the centre. To separate, twist the halves.



PAUL WEBSTER

Tipsy melon

1 min

Standing time: none

3 ripe Ogen melons, or small honeydew melons
125ml / 4fl oz tawny port
4 large pinches ground ginger
sprigs of mint, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Halve the best two melons, scalloping the edges (see Cook's notes, left). With a spoon, scrape out and discard the seeds. Scoop out a little of the flesh to enlarge the cavity slightly. Turn upside down and leave to drain.
2 Cut remaining melon in half; discard seeds. Using a melon baller, cut the flesh into balls.
3 Put the melon balls in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Add the port and ginger. Microwave, uncovered, for 1-1½ minutes, until hot, stirring once. Watch constantly to make sure the port does not boil. Leave until cold.
4 Place the melon shells in individual dishes and fill with the melon balls and port. Cover with stretch wrap and chill for 2 hours. Serve garnished with sprigs of fresh mint.

VARIATIONS
Use rosé wine in place of port or, for a non-alcoholic starter, try red or white grape juice. If fresh mint is not available, garnish with strawberries or other soft fruit.

MENU

Tipsy Melon
A port-enriched starter in scalloped shells

Mediterranean Mullet
A succulent fish dish

Red Butter Sauce
A piquant wine-based sauce

Lemony Potatoes
Hot potato piped in creamy whirls

Hot Brie with Crackers
A novel way with a rich, classic cheese

SERVES 4

Countdown

Early in the day
Prepare and microwave the Tipsy Melon; leave covered in the refrigerator. Microwave the potatoes and pipe them on to a serving dish. Cover and refrigerate. Prepare the vegetables for the Mediterranean Mullet. Cover and refrigerate.

Two hours before the meal
Take the Brie out of the refrigerator. Arrange it on the cheese board with the crackers. Cook the mullet and leave to cool; cover and refrigerate. Chop the onion and measure out the other ingredients for the Red Butter Sauce. Lay the table and chill the wine — white wine is a good choice.

Forty minutes before serving
Prepare garnishes for the melon and fish. Open the wine. Make the Red Butter Sauce and leave in the dish of hot water to keep warm. Heat the fish and vegetables.

During the first course
Reheat the fish at 70% (Medium) for 8-12 minutes. Transfer to the heated dish and cover loosely. Reheat the vegetables at 70% (Medium-High) for 6-8 minutes; arrange around the fish. Reheat the potatoes at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.

After the main course
Microwave the Brie and make the coffee.

Mediterranean mullet

17 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Ask your fishmonger to clean and scale the fish, leaving the heads intact.

Cook them in a 25-28cm / 10-11in oval dish which is 5cm / 2in deep. Serve on a hot platter which is large enough to hold both fish. If you prefer it, skin the fish before serving and pour the Red Butter Sauce (opposite) over them on the hot serving platter.

2 × 900g / 2lb grey mullet*, cleaned and scaled
1 garlic clove, peeled and halved
salt and pepper
1 lemon, sliced
2 tomatoes, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped parsley
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 courgettes, cut into 2.5cm / 1in strips
1 red pepper, seeded and cut into 2.5cm / 1in strips
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
sprigs of Italian parsley
Red Butter Sauce (opposite), to serve

SERVES 4

1 Rub the inside of each fish with the cut edge of the garlic. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

2 Arrange the lemon and tomato slices inside the fish and sprinkle with parsley. Place the fish in the cooking dish.

3 Arrange onion, courgettes and pepper around. Pour over the wine. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 17-20 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 5 minutes, until the fish flakes easily and vegetables are tender. Stand for 5 minutes.

4 Reheat the fish for 2-3 minutes at 70% (Medium-High) if needed. Transfer the fish to a hot serving platter. Arrange the vegetables around and garnish with parsley. Serve at once, accompanied by the warm Red Butter Sauce.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use bream instead of grey mullet.

Lemony potatoes

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

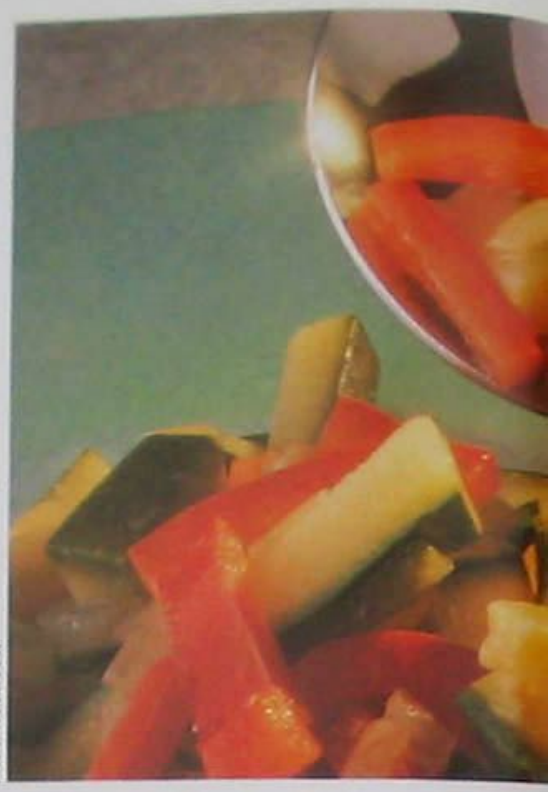
700g / 1½lb potatoes, peeled and cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
60ml / 4tbls water
25g / 1oz butter
1 small egg, beaten
grated zest of 1 lemon
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put potatoes and water in a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

2 Drain and mash. Beat in butter, egg and lemon. Season to taste.

3 Put the potato into a piping bag with a large star nozzle. Pipe in rosettes on an oiled dish.



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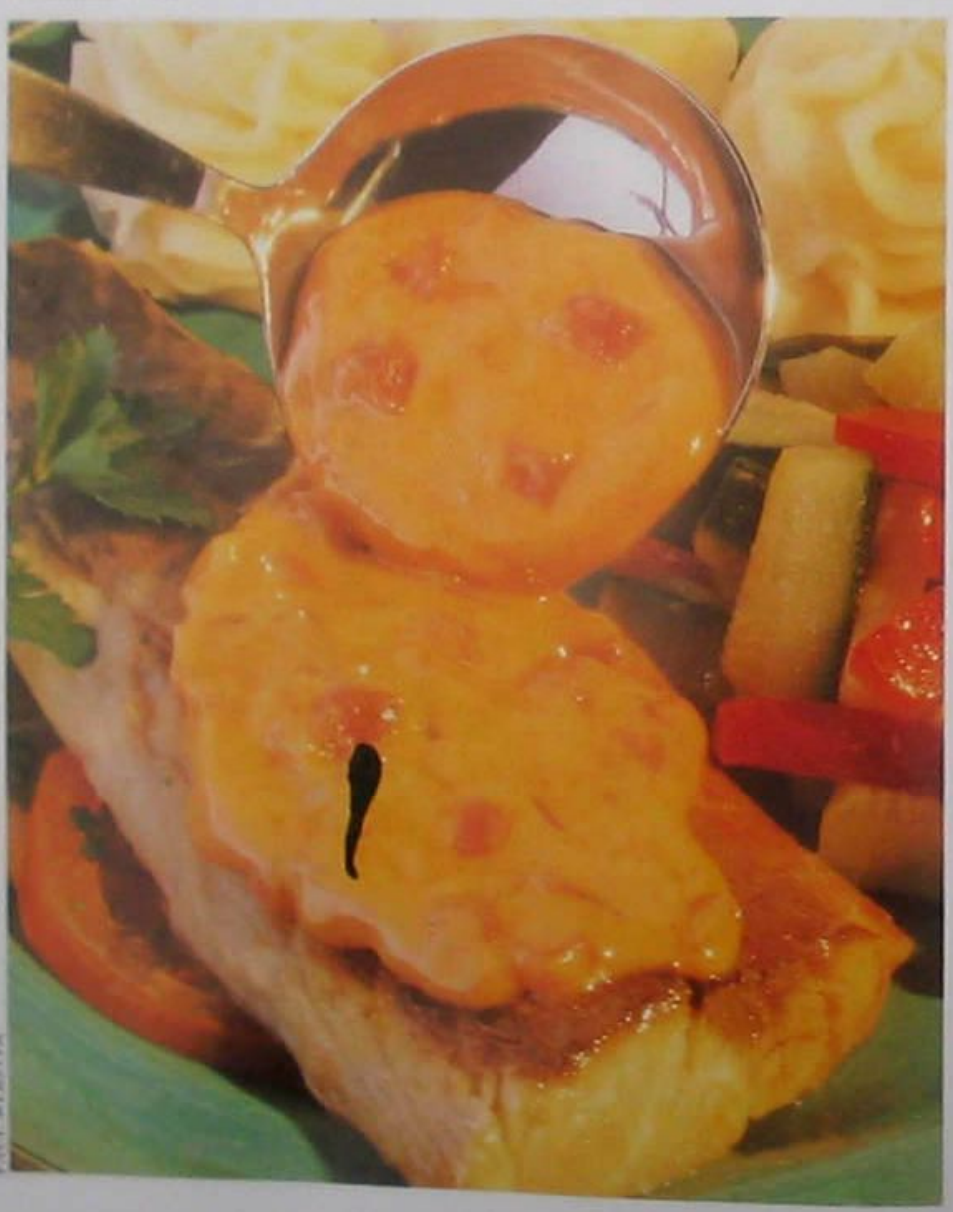

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Left: *Mediterranean Mullet*
Above: *garnish vegetables*

Red butter sauce

7 mins

Standing time: none

This sauce is best if it is served immediately. If you wish to make it ahead of time, leave it standing in hot water until needed. If the ingredients separate, whisk thoroughly before serving.

1 small onion, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls red wine vinegar
45ml / 3tbls red wine
225g / 8oz unsalted butter, cut into cubes
10ml / 2tsp tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper

MAKES 275ml / ½pt SAUCE

1 Place the onion, wine vinegar and wine in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes or until the liquid is reduced to approximately 15ml / 1tbls.
2 Stand the bowl in a roasting tin of boiling water. Gradually whisk the butter into the onion mixture, one cube at a time.
3 Stir in the tomato purée or paste and season to taste.

Hot Brie with crackers

1½ mins

Standing time: none

This unusual way of serving Brie works equally well with the more strongly-flavoured Camembert.

275g / 10oz wedge of Brie cheese
8 wholewheat crackers
grapes to serve

SERVES 4

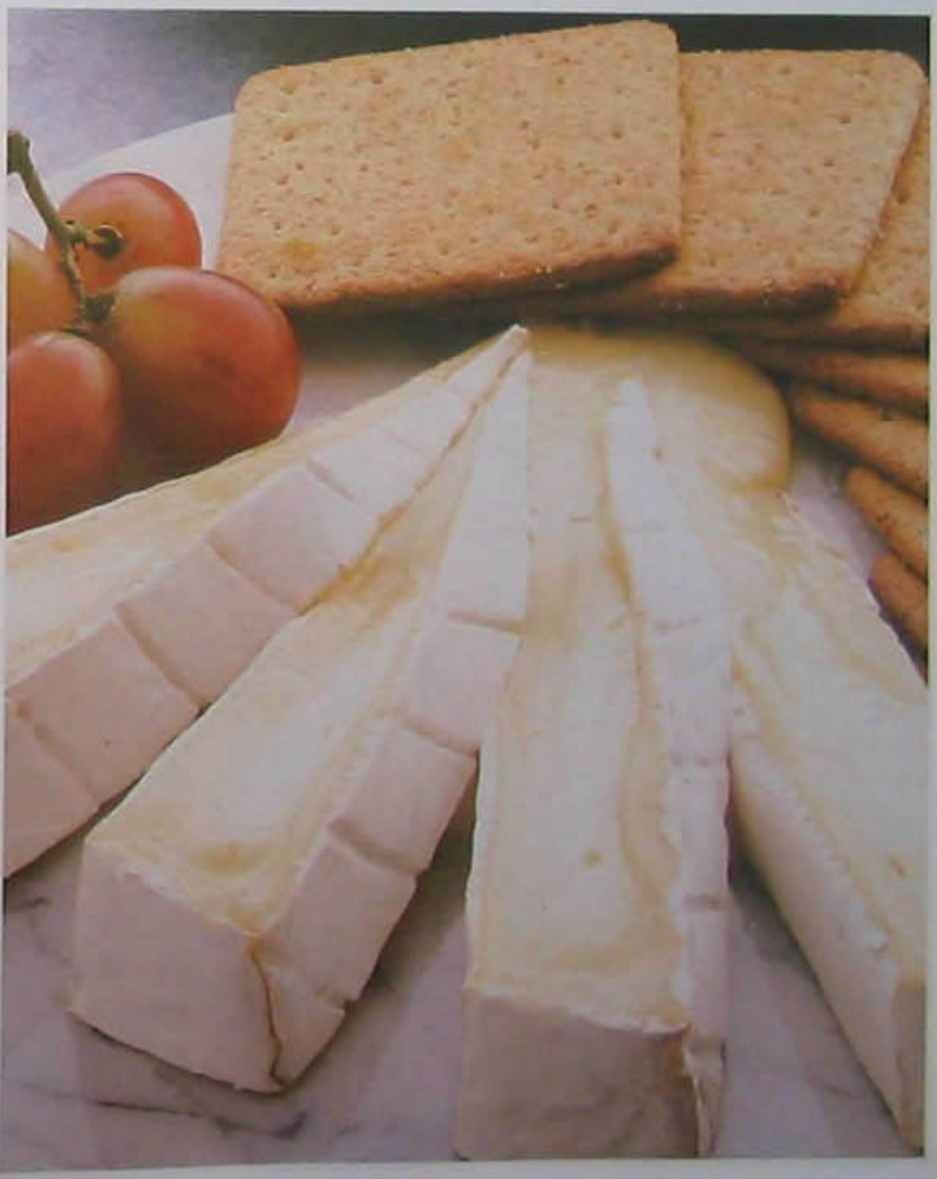
1 Place the Brie on a wooden or marble cheeseboard and cut it lengthways into four equal slices. Turn the slices on their side to fan them out lightly, overlapping the thin ends.
2 Arrange the crackers on the board. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 1½-2 minutes until the cheese is warm and just beginning to melt, giving the board a quarter turn every 30 seconds. Serve immediately with the grapes.

Microtips

Check that the cheeseboard will fit easily in the microwave. If your microwave has a turntable, choose a round board — a square one may catch on the cooker walls and stop the turntable working.

It is important to overlap the thinner ends of the cheese, otherwise they will melt before the rest is warmed through. Take care not to overheat the cheese — it continues to melt when it has been removed from the cooker.

Hot Brie with Crackers



PAUL WEBSTER

Topping pies

Open sweet tarts and flans are simply delicious; add a pretty lattice or a crunchy crumble topping and they are an even more appetizing dessert.

Traditional double crust pies are not successful in the microwave, but you can add a variety of attractive toppings to a filled pastry case to ring the changes and give more appeal. To start you need a pastry case (see Part 14, page 370). It is important that the cooked pie case is cooled completely before the filling is added, otherwise the pastry will lose its crispness.

Tips for toppings

Save the pastry trimmings from the pie case and use to make decorative shapes (see Cherry Clover pie, page 1591). Pastry topping such as the lattice and cut-outs, should be cooked separately, then put on the pie just before serving. This prevents the filling from bubbling on to the decorations and spoiling the appearance of the pie.

Lattice Fruit Pie

Lattice fruit pie

5 mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)
1 cooked pastry lattice (see below)

FILLING
5ml / 1tsp arrowroot
900g / 2lb can stoned cherries, drained with juice reserved

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the arrowroot into a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Blend in 30ml / 2tbls of the reserved juice, then gradually stir in the remaining juice. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thickened, stirring every minute. Leave until cold; mix with cherries.
2 Pour the filling into the pastry case. Cover with the lattice and serve cold. To serve hot, re-heat the filled pie at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Decorate immediately before serving.

VARIATION
Cherry Clover Pie: Knead the pastry trimmings together, roll out until 3mm / ⅛in thick and cut into 4cm / 1½in clover leaves. Mix a pinch of cinnamon with 5ml / 1tsp sugar and sprinkle over the pastry leaves.

Arrange the leaves in a circle on a piece of greaseproof paper in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until puffy and dry, giving the paper a quarter turn every 1 minute. Carefully transfer the leaves to the top of the filled pie.

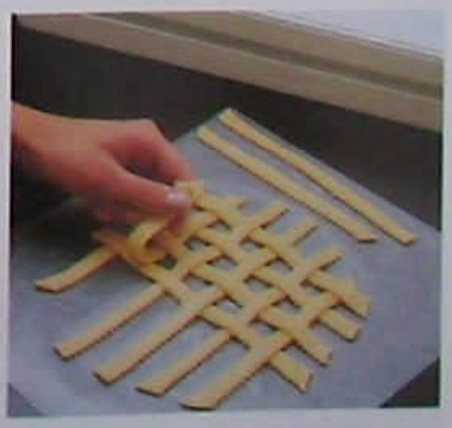
Cherry Clover Pie, a variation of Lattice Fruit Pie

Microtips

Because of their high fat and sugar content, the pies here should not be left unattended at any stage during microwaving. If the pie shows any sign of overheating remove from cooker immediately.

How to microwave a pastry lattice

Roll out *175g / 6oz pastry to a 23cm / 9in circle. Place on greaseproof paper. Cut in 12mm / ½in strips.*



Weave *strips into a lattice. (Take care not to stretch pastry.) Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes.*

Remove *lattice, on the paper, from microwave. Handle carefully. Slide it on to hot pie or cool on a rack.*

Guidelines for microwaving fruit pies

Measure *across the top of the dish (not the base) to find out its diameter. For fruit pies the dish should be 2.5–4cm / 1–1½in deep to avoid any bubbling over.*

Pinch *up the pastry edges to stand well above the dish. This helps make pastry case deep enough to hold filling.*

Fill *the pastry case only two-thirds full, otherwise the filling may bubble over during microwaving. Cook any surplus filling in a separate container, or use for another pie.*

Stand *dish on greaseproof paper. If filling bubbles too hard, reduce power and allow extra time if needed.*

Crumble topping

This is such a useful mix it is well worth making in bulk. The mix can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks or frozen (see Freezer notes, right). To ring the changes, sift 5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon or mixed spice with the flour.

250g / 9oz plain flour
175g / 6oz butter or margarine, diced
75g / 3oz sugar

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 3 × 23cm / 9in PIES

1 Sift the flour into a bowl. Add the butter and rub it in until the mixture resembles fine bread crumbs. Stir in the sugar.
2 Spoon into a container and refrigerate until required.
3 Use for topping flans and small fruit tartlets, as needed.

Freezer notes

The basic crumble topping freezes well for up to 6 months. If spice is added do not freeze for longer than 2 months. Divide the rubbed-in topping into thirds and freeze in separate freezer bags. Use straight from frozen, sprinkling one bag of topping directly over the pie filling. Microwaving time remains the same.

Festive pie

22 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

22cm / 8½in cooked wholewheat pastry case (see Part 4, page 87*)
175g / 6oz wholewheat pastry trimmings

FILLING
450g / 1lb mincemeat*
75ml / 5tbls water
100g / 4oz raisins
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
25g / 1oz butter
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest

SERVES 4-6

1 Spoon the mincemeat into a 1L / 2pt bowl. Add water and microwave at 100% (High), uncovered, for 6-7 minutes, stirring once.
2 Mix in the remaining filling ingredients, then spoon into the pastry case. Microwave at 100% (High), uncovered, for 14-16 minutes, giving a quarter turn every 4 minutes. Stand for 3 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, knead the pastry trimmings together, then roll out until 3mm / ⅛in thick and cut into 6-8 star shapes using a 5cm / 2in cutter. Arrange the shapes in a circle on a sheet of greaseproof paper in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until puffy and dry, giving the paper a quarter turn halfway through the cooking time.
4 Carefully arrange the pastry shapes on top of the pie and serve at once, while hot.

** Page 111 in some regional editions.*

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use Fruit-mince.

Apple crumble pie

15 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)
175g / 6oz Crumble Topping (see recipe, opposite)

FILLING
700g / 1½lb apples, peeled, cored and sliced
75g / 5tbls soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
30ml / 2tbls plain flour

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine all the ingredients for the filling and spoon into the pastry case. Spread the crumble topping evenly over the filling.
2 Stand the dish on a piece of greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-16 minutes, or until the apples are soft; giving dish a quarter turn every 5 minutes. Stand for 3 minutes.
3 Serve hot, warm or cold, with cream or vanilla ice cream.

Above: *Apple Crumble Pie*
Left: *Festive Pie*

Meat cubes from frozen

Meat cubes can be used in countless ways — for casseroles, kebabs or oriental dishes. With some ready-frozen cubes in store, plus a little microwave help, you will never be short of a satisfying meal.

Cubed meat makes a really handy freezer standby as it keeps well and can be used in a great variety of recipes. Thawing by microwave takes just four minutes per 450g / 1lb and does not toughen the meat at all. Once thawed, the microwave can help to transform the meat cubes into some satisfying mid-week family suppers like Vegetable Beef Kebabs as well as some classy dinner party dishes such as Sweet and Sour Pork.

Buying frozen meat cubes

Beef, lamb and pork cubes are sold in supermarkets and freezer centres; if they prove hard to find, try freezing your own.

Sweet and Sour Pork

PAUL WYMAN

Choose less expensive packs for casseroling and better-quality cuts for kebabs. Read the packet instructions carefully for freezer life, and transfer the meat to your own freezer as soon as possible.

Thawing and cooking

Thaw the meat at 50% (Medium) for fast, efficient results. There is no need for standing time if the meat is to be casseroled, as it cooks through with the longer microwaving time. Cubes to be used for kebabs should be allowed to stand and thaw completely before using.

Commercially bought cubed meat is generally well trimmed of fat, but may require some tenderizing to be enjoyed at its best. When used in casseroles and sauces, the cubes tenderize during the relatively long cooking times. When making kebabs with frozen meat, it helps to marinate the meat before microwaving; this gives perfectly succulent results.

Serve accompaniments to suit the flavour of the dish prepared. Try boiled rice or noodles with an oriental-style dish, pasta shapes with a saucy recipe and baked potatoes with a spicy dish. A crisp side salad is also a popular partner to meaty dishes.

Sweet and sour pork

38 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 3tsp cornflour
1.5ml / ¼tsp hot curry powder
30ml / 2tbls wine vinegar
150ml / ¼pt boiling chicken stock
15ml / 1tbls brown sugar
2.5cm / 1in fresh root ginger, grated
1 small red pepper, seeded, sliced and chopped diagonally
432g / 15¼oz can pineapple cubes in natural juice, drained
1 small onion, finely chopped
450g / 1lb frozen pork cubes, thawed (see steps)
1 bunch of spring onions, sliced
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Blend the cornflour and curry powder with the vinegar in a large casserole and stir in the boiling stock. Mix in the brown sugar, ginger, red pepper, pineapple and onion. Stir in the pork cubes.

2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes, or until the pork is tender stirring twice; add the spring onions for the last 5 minutes. Season and serve.

Sweet and sour pork for two: thaw only 225g / 8oz pork cubes (see steps, below) for 2½-3 minutes rearranging cubes once. Halve remaining ingredients. Follow recipe, but microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, then at 50% (Medium) for 18-21 minutes, or until pork is tender.

Microtips

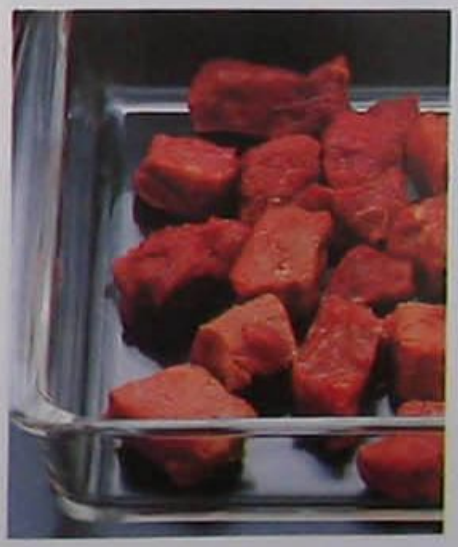
The time boxes for each of the recipes include thawing times for the meat cubes. Standing time for the cubes after thawing is given where necessary.

Freezer notes

Some brands of commercially-frozen meat cubes are free-flowing. To thaw, spread out in a dish and microwave as in step 1 but for only half the time. Stir, rearrange and continue microwaving for the remaining time as in step 3.

How to thaw meat cubes

Place *450g / 1lb frozen meat cubes in a dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, or until the cubes can be separated.*



Spread *the cubes out in a single layer in the dish, moving the least thawed cubes to the outside of the dish. Continue thawing at 50% (Medium).*

Microwave *for 2-3 minutes, or until a fork can pierce the meat easily. Stand 4-5 minutes, unless making a casserole when standing is not necessary.*

Beef and wine casserole

38 mins

Standing time: none

Beef cooked in a wine sauce is perfect complemented by noodles or tagliatelle, and served with a tossed mixed or green salad.

15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt red wine
150ml / ¼pt boiling beef stock
450g / 1lb frozen beef cubes, thawed (see steps, page 1595)
3 celery stalks, cut into 3mm / ⅛in diagonal slices
1 onion, thinly sliced
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley, or 15ml / 1tbls chopped, fresh
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 In a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, blend the flour with the wine, then stir in the boiling stock. Mix in the beef together with the celery, onion and parsley. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.

2 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes, or until the beef is tender, stirring twice. Season to taste and serve.

Beef and wine casserole for two: thaw only 225g / 8oz frozen beef cubes (see steps, page 1595) for 2-3 minutes, rearranging the cubes once. Halve all the remaining ingredients and combine with the beef in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 15 minutes, or until tender. Season and serve.

Microtips

The exact length of cooking time can vary according to the brand of frozen meat. Test at the end of the minimum recommended microwaving time and continue cooking until meat is perfectly tender. If necessary, add more boiling stock to the casserole to prevent the meat drying out.

Left: *Beef and Wine Casserole*
Below: *Pork Chow Mein*

Pork chow mein

38 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this Chinese-style dish with noodles and green beans.

15ml / 3tsp cornflour
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
60ml / 4tbls white wine
90ml / 6tbls boiling chicken stock
450g / 1lb frozen pork cubes, thawed (see steps, page 1595)
5ml / 1tsp sugar
½ small red pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
213g / 7½oz can mushrooms, drained and sliced
227g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
3 celery stalks, thinly sliced
280g / 10oz can beansprouts, drained
8 spring onions, sliced
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Blend the cornflour with the soy

sauce in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole. Stir in the wine and boiling stock. Mix in the pork, together with the sugar, red pepper, mushrooms, water chestnuts and celery, tossing to coat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.

2 Add the beansprouts and onions; cover. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and continue microwaving for 25-30 minutes, or until the pork is tender, stirring twice. Season to taste and serve.

VARIATIONS

Substitute fresh beansprouts for canned, if preferred; rinse or soak in water for 10 minutes, then drain well and add at the same time as the canned. The water chestnuts can be replaced with bamboo shoots.

Italian lamb kebabs

19 mins

Standing after thawing: 4-5 mins

275ml / ½pt bottled Italian salad dressing
15ml / 1tbls tomato paste or purée
450g / 1lb frozen lamb cubes, thawed (see steps, page 1595)
8 mushrooms
½ green pepper, seeded and cut into 16 cubes
8 cherry tomatoes

SERVES 4

1 Whisk together the salad dressing and tomato paste and pour into a shallow dish. Place the lamb cubes in the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 6-8 hours.

2 Thread on to each of four wooden skewers in the following order: a lamb cube, mushroom, green pepper cube, lamb cube and tomato. Repeat sequence to end of each skewer.

3 Arrange skewers on a roasting rack or in a large, shallow dish. Spoon over marinade and cover with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 14-15 minutes, turning skewers over and rearranging twice. Drain.

4 Increase the power to 100% (High) and continue microwaving kebabs for 2-3 minutes, or until lamb is tender, turning once.

Italian Lamb Kebabs

Lemony lamb kebabs

19 mins

Standing after thawing: 4-5 mins

The lemon marinade gives these kebabs plenty of flavour.

450g / 1lb frozen lamb cubes, thawed (see steps, page 1595)
½ green pepper, seeded and cut into 12 strips
1 small onion, cut into eight wedges
1 lemon, cut into eight wedges

LEMON MARINADE

150ml / ¼pt lemon juice
75ml / 5tbls olive oil
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 For the marinade: whisk together all the ingredients and pour into a shallow dish.

2 Place the lamb cubes in the marinade. Cover and leave in a cool place for 3-4 hours, turning the cubes once.

3 Thread on to each of four wooden skewers and in the following order: a green pepper strip, lamb cube, onion wedge, lamb cube, lemon wedge, lamb cube and green pepper strip. Repeat the sequence to the end of each skewer.

4 Arrange the skewers in a large shallow dish. Spoon over the marinade and cover with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 14-15 minutes, turning the skewers over and rearranging twice. Discard the marinade.

5 Increase power to 100% (High) and continue microwaving the kebabs for 2-3 minutes, or until the lamb is tender. Serve with rice, or pitta bread and a tomato salad.

Vegetable beef kebabs

18 mins

Standing after thawing: 4-5 mins

450g / 1lb frozen beef cubes, thawed (see steps, page 1595)
8 cherry tomatoes
2 onions, quartered
2 courgettes, cut into eight slices

BASTE
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls dried parsley
2 garlic cloves, crushed
90ml / 6tbls apple juice or cider
15ml / 1tbls brandy or sherry
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 For the baste; put the butter, parsley, garlic, apple juice and brandy in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until butter melts. Stir in cheese.
2 Thread on to each of four wooden skewers and in the following order: a beef cube, tomato, onion wedge and courgette slice. Repeat the sequence to the end of each skewer.
3 Arrange the skewers on a roasting rack or large shallow dish. Spoon over the baste and cover with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12-14 minutes, turning the skewers over and rearranging twice. Drain off and discard the basting juices.
4 Increase power to 100% (High) and continue microwaving the kebabs for 2-3 minutes, or until the beef is tender, turning once.

Left: *Vegetable Beef Kebabs*
Below: *Chilli Beef*

Chilli beef

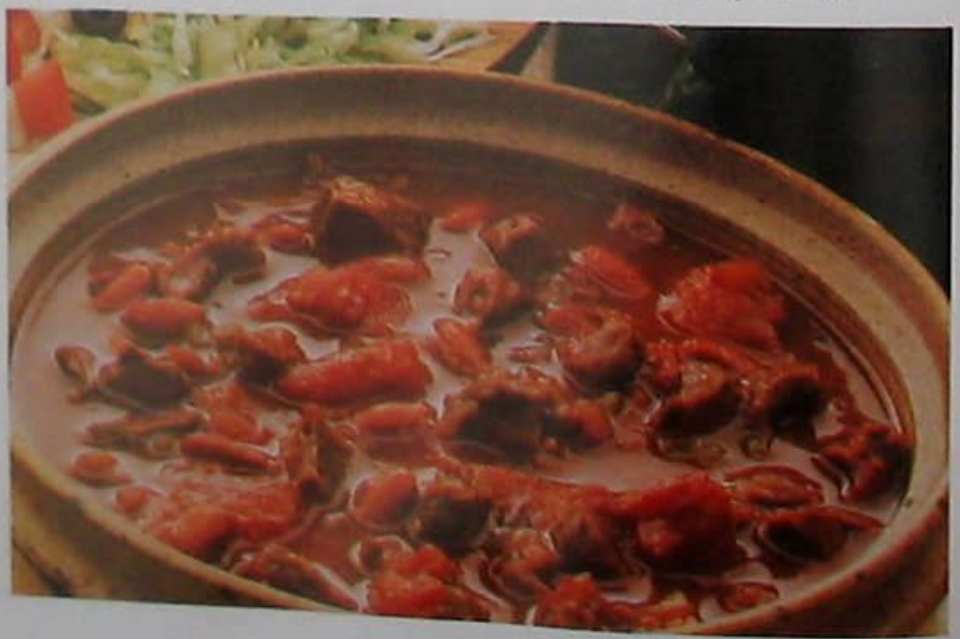
38 mins

Standing time: none

10ml / 2tsp plain flour
12.5ml / 2½tsp chilli powder
10ml / 2tsp ground turmeric
397g / 14oz can tomatoes
450g / 1lb frozen beef cubes thawed (see steps, page 1595)
439g / 15½oz can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ small green pepper, seeded and chopped
90ml / 6tbls beef stock
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Blend the flour, chilli powder and turmeric with the tomatoes. Mix into the beef in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole together with the kidney beans, garlic, green pepper and stock. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
2 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes, or until the beef is tender, stirring twice. Season to taste and serve with rice or baked potatoes.



Bready snacks

When you need a quick but satisfying bite, a bread-based snack is the obvious answer. But you don't have to limit yourself to beans on toast. It's time for a change — using your microwave.

Bread is a wholesome, staple food that is a pleasure to eat — full of flavour and nourishment. It comes in an endless variety of shapes and types, sizes and textures, so be adventurous and try different local bakers for regional specialities and encourage them to produce the good product bread should be.

It is a versatile base for a filling snack or light meal. Hot snacks, open sandwiches, rolls and filled pittas make lunch, teatime or supper time treats for the whole family. You can make clever use of leftovers, making small amounts go further in hot, satisfying snacks. The microwave is the ideal way to cook them quickly with no fuss.

To extend sandwiches into a light meal, serve them with a salad, crisps or French fries.

Picnic pitta snacks

3¾ mins

Standing time: none

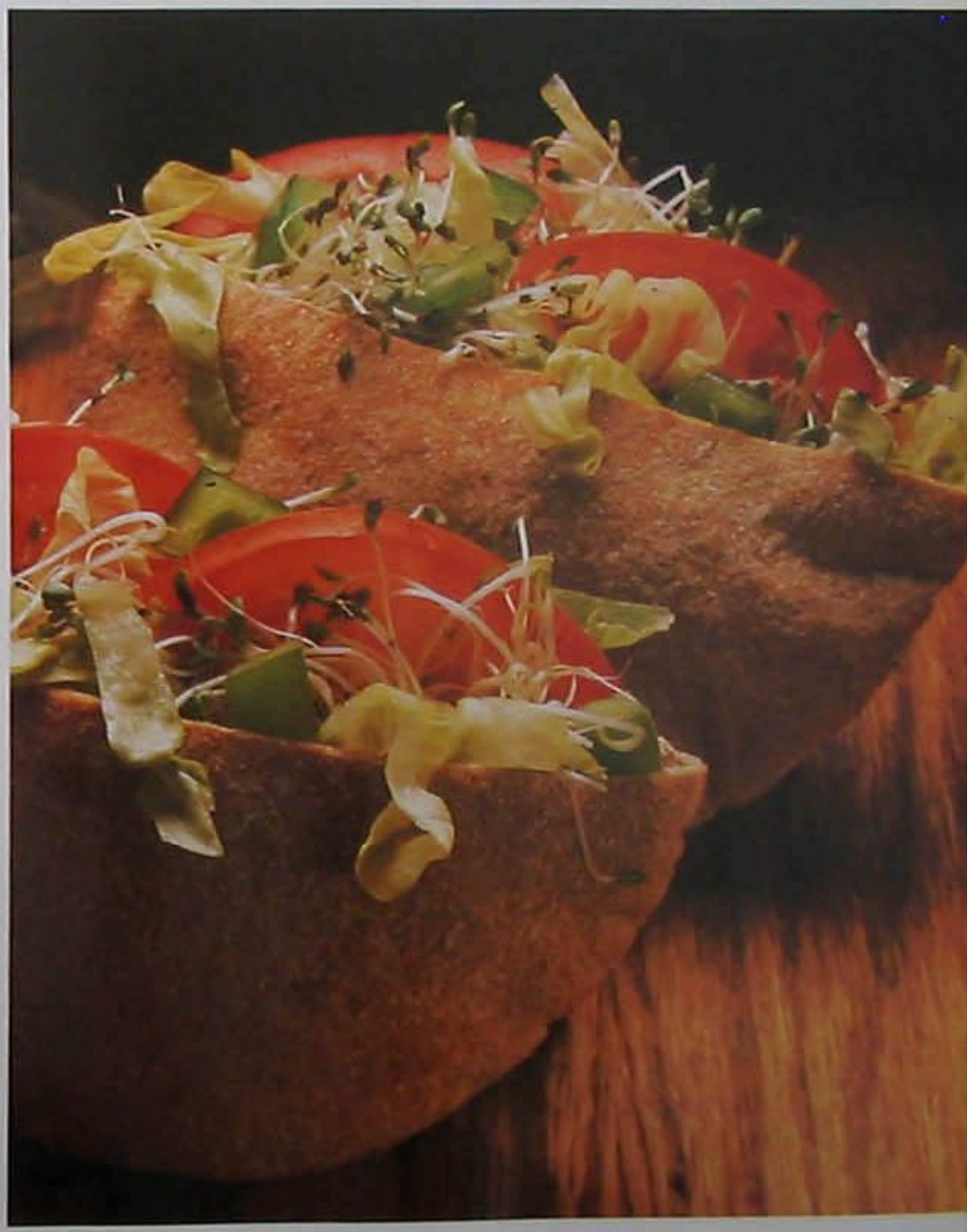
4 oval wholewheat pittas, halved
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
½ crisp lettuce, shredded
2-3 tomatoes, sliced
120ml / 8tbls alfalfa sprouts
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped

FILLING
1 onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
30ml / 2tbls sesame seeds
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mint
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
pinch each of garlic powder, allspice and cayenne
425g / 15oz can chick peas, rinsed and drained
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt

SERVES 4

1 For the filling, mix onion, parsley, sesame seeds, oil, oregano, mint, paprika, garlic powder, allspice and cayenne in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until onion is almost tender, stirring once. Cool slightly.
2 Place mixture in food processor or blender. Add chick peas and yoghurt and purée until smooth.
3 Spoon 45ml / 3tbls filling and 15ml / 1tbls cheese into each pitta half. Place on absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, or until cheese melts.
4 Divide salad ingredients between pitta halves and serve.

Picnic Pitta Snacks



Barbecue beef toasties

7½ mins

Standing time: none

Turn the remains of a roast into this richly flavoured snack. The sauce prevents the meat from drying out during microwaving.

8 slices bread, toasted, and cut diagonally in half
450g / 1lb cooked beef, sliced

BARBECUE SAUCE
120ml / 8tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
225g / 8oz can sliced button mushrooms, drained
30ml / 2tbls brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp malt vinegar
pinch of chilli powder
pinch of ground cloves

SERVES 4

1 Combine ketchup, mushrooms, brown sugar, vinegar and spices in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, or until hot, stirring twice.
2 Meanwhile, arrange the beef slices on toast.
3 Spoon the sauce over the meat. Place four toasties on a plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until heated through. Repeat with the remaining toasties in three batches.

Barbecue beef toasties for two: Halve the ingredients. Microwave the sauce for 2-3 minutes and the topped toast, four pieces at a time, for 1-1½ minutes.

Barbecue Beef Toasties

Freezer notes

To use frozen beefburgers for Beef 'n' Bacon Burgers, arrange 4 × 100g / 4oz beefburgers in a ring on absorbent paper. Microwave, uncovered, at 20-30% (Defrost) for 10-12 minutes, turning over and rearranging burgers three times. Stand for 2-3 minutes. To test whether the beefburgers are thawed, press; they should be soft all over.

Beef 'n' bacon burgers

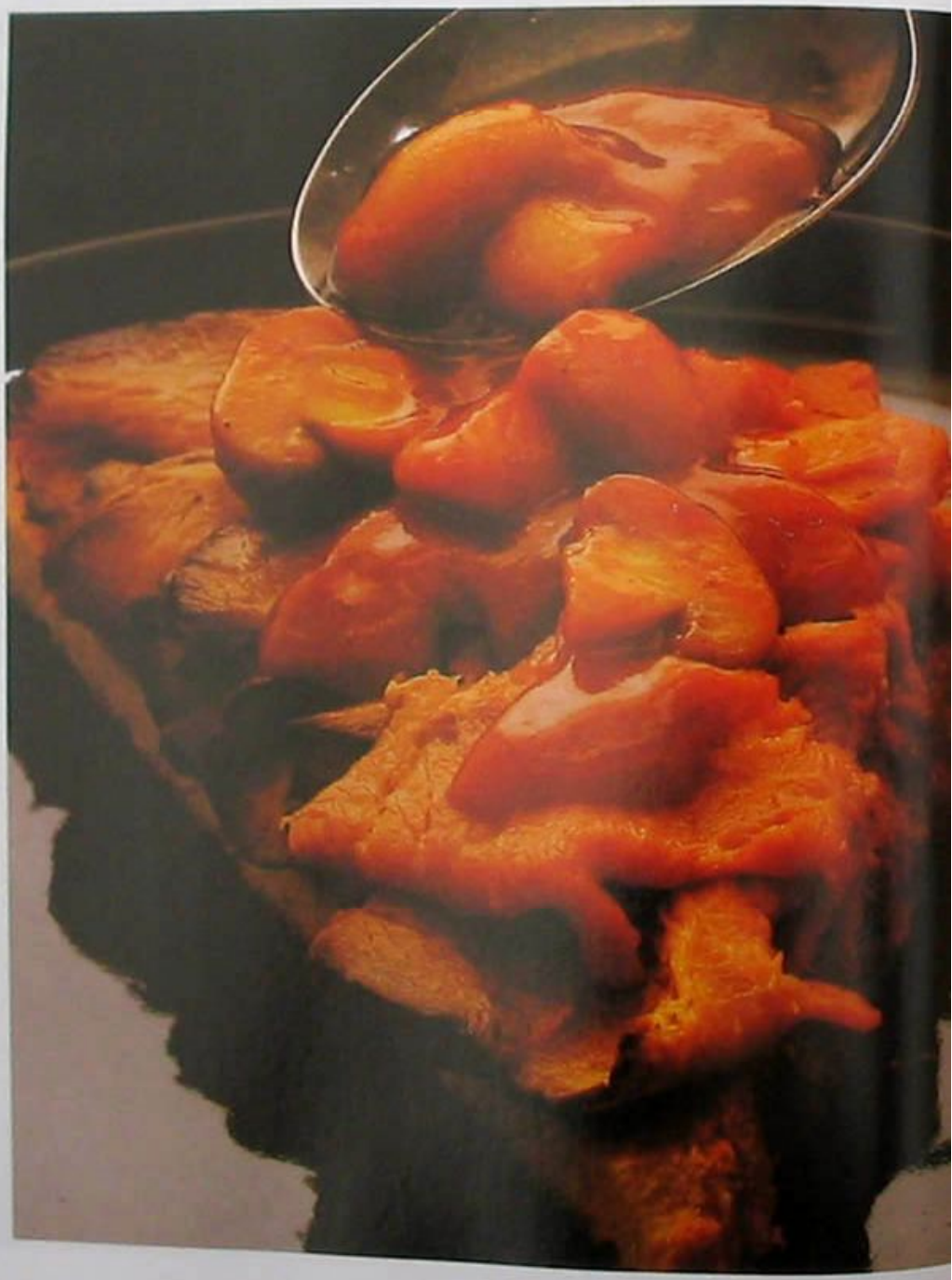
7¼ mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

450g / 1lb minced beef
75ml / 5tbls chopped spring onions
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire Sauce (optional)
4 bacon rashers, rinded and halved
4 slices cheese
4 hamburger buns, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the mince, onions and sauce. Shape into four 12mm / ½in-thick burgers.
2 Arrange burgers on a plate lined with absorbent paper, or place on a roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Turn burgers over and microwave for a further 2-3 minutes, or until done to your liking. Cover and stand 1-2 minutes.
3 Place the bacon rashers on a plate lined with absorbent paper. Cover with more absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until cooked.
4 Place bacon on top of the burgers and cover each with a slice of cheese. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, to melt cheese. Serve in the buns.



Saucy turkey toasts

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

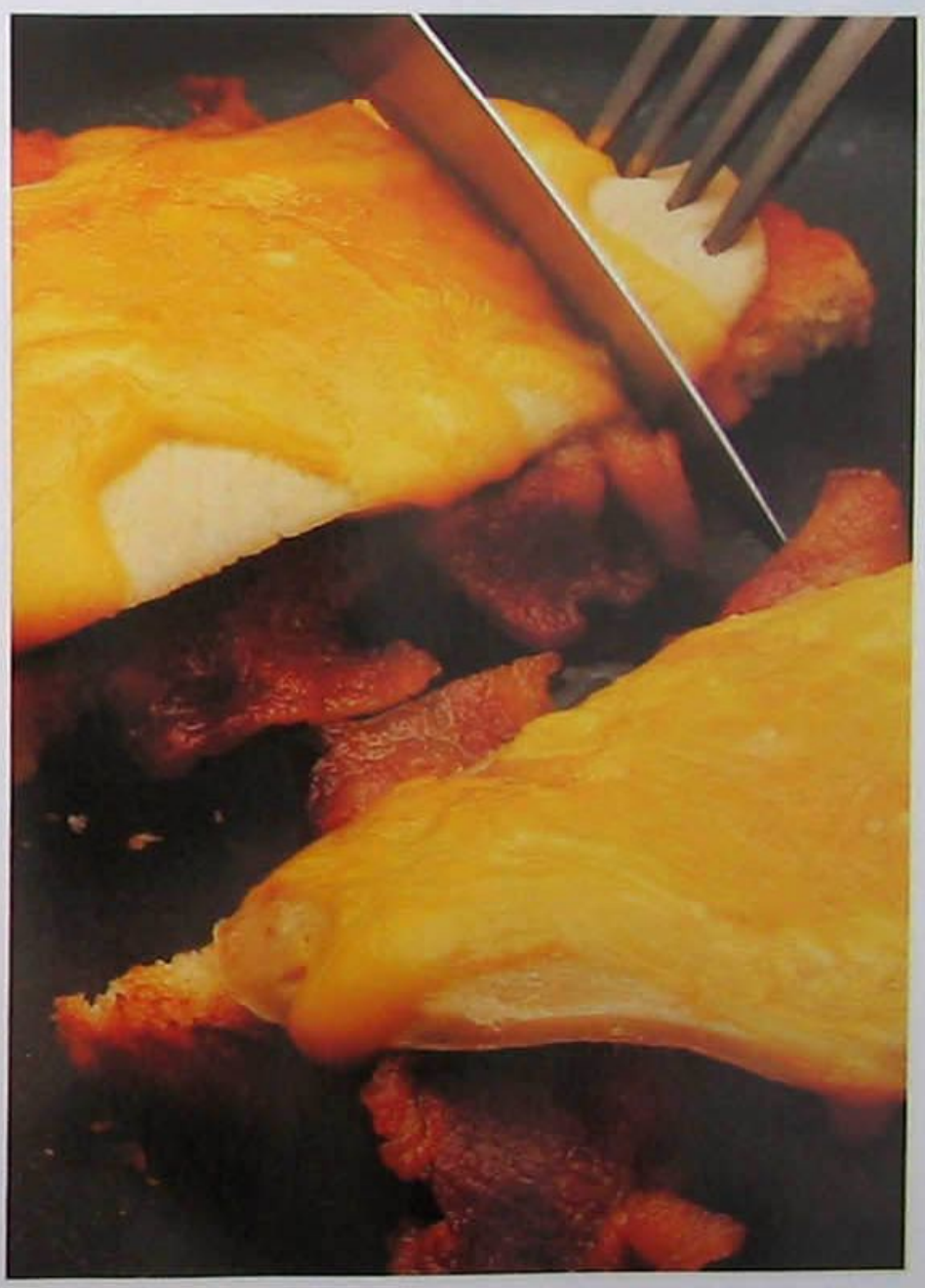
4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded
½ × 40g / 1½oz packet cheese sauce mix
150ml / ¼pt milk
2 slices bread, toasted and cut diagonally in half
4 slices cooked turkey breast
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 2

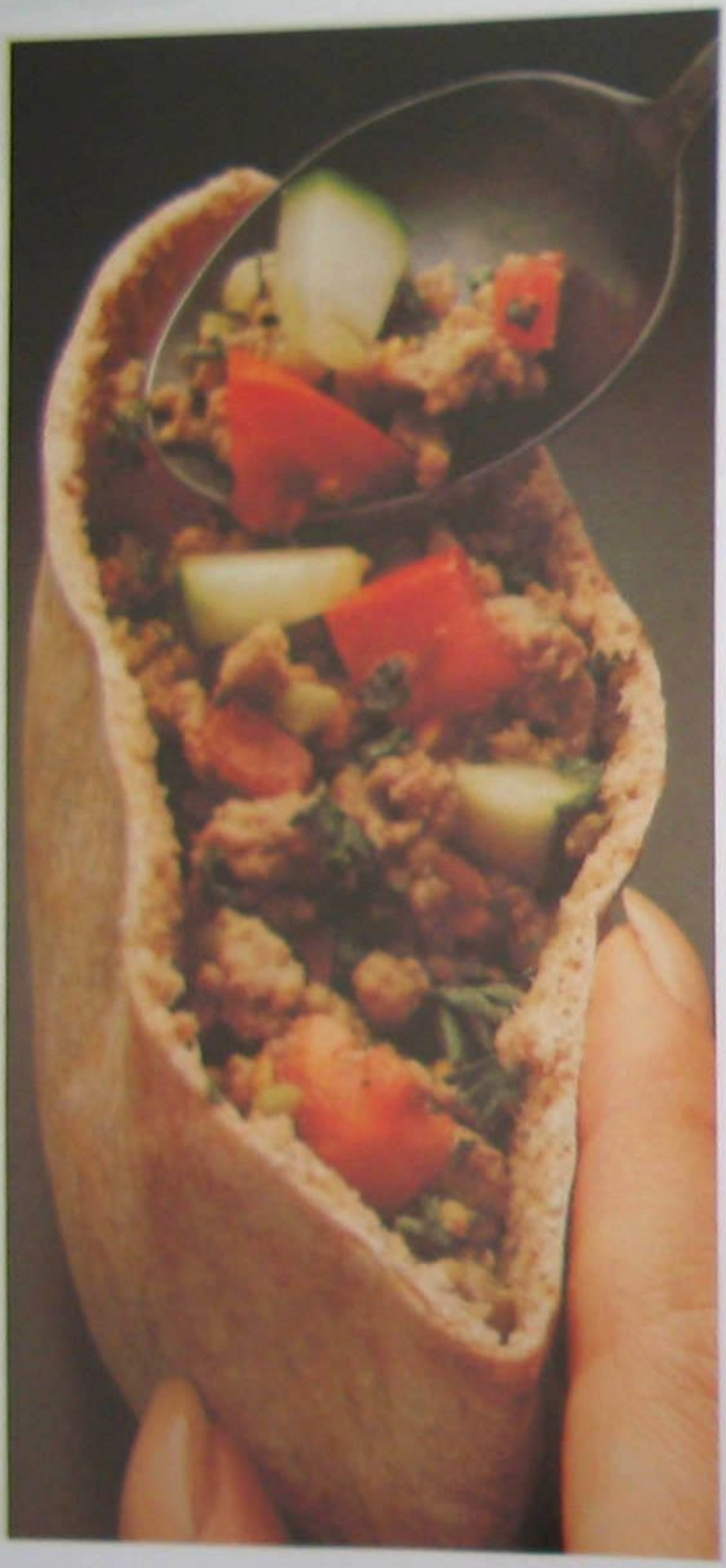
1 Place bacon on a roasting rack. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes. Stand 5 minutes.
2 Blend sauce mix with milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until thick; stirring twice.
3 Halve bacon rashers. Put two halves on each piece of toast. Top with one slice of turkey and sauce. Sprinkle with grated cheese.
4 Arrange on a plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes to heat through.

Microtips

To ensure even cooking, arrange toast triangles on absorbent paper with the cut edge to the outside.



Above: *Beef 'n' Bacon Burgers*
Right: *Saucy Turkey Toasts*



Beefy pittas

5 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb minced beef
2 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and cut into 12mm / ½in pieces
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper
4 tomatoes, chopped
175g / 6oz cucumber, chopped
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
2 large oval pitta breads, cut in half

SERVES 4

1 Mix beef, bacon, onion, garlic, herbs and seasoning in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, stirring twice. Drain.
2 Stir in tomatoes, parsley and cucumber. Spoon into the pitta 'pockets' and serve.

Hot ham and cheese roll

30 secs

Standing time: none

1 poppy seed roll, split and lightly toasted
butter for spreading
3 slices ham
1 slice yellow processed cheese
1 slice white processed cheese
English mustard to serve

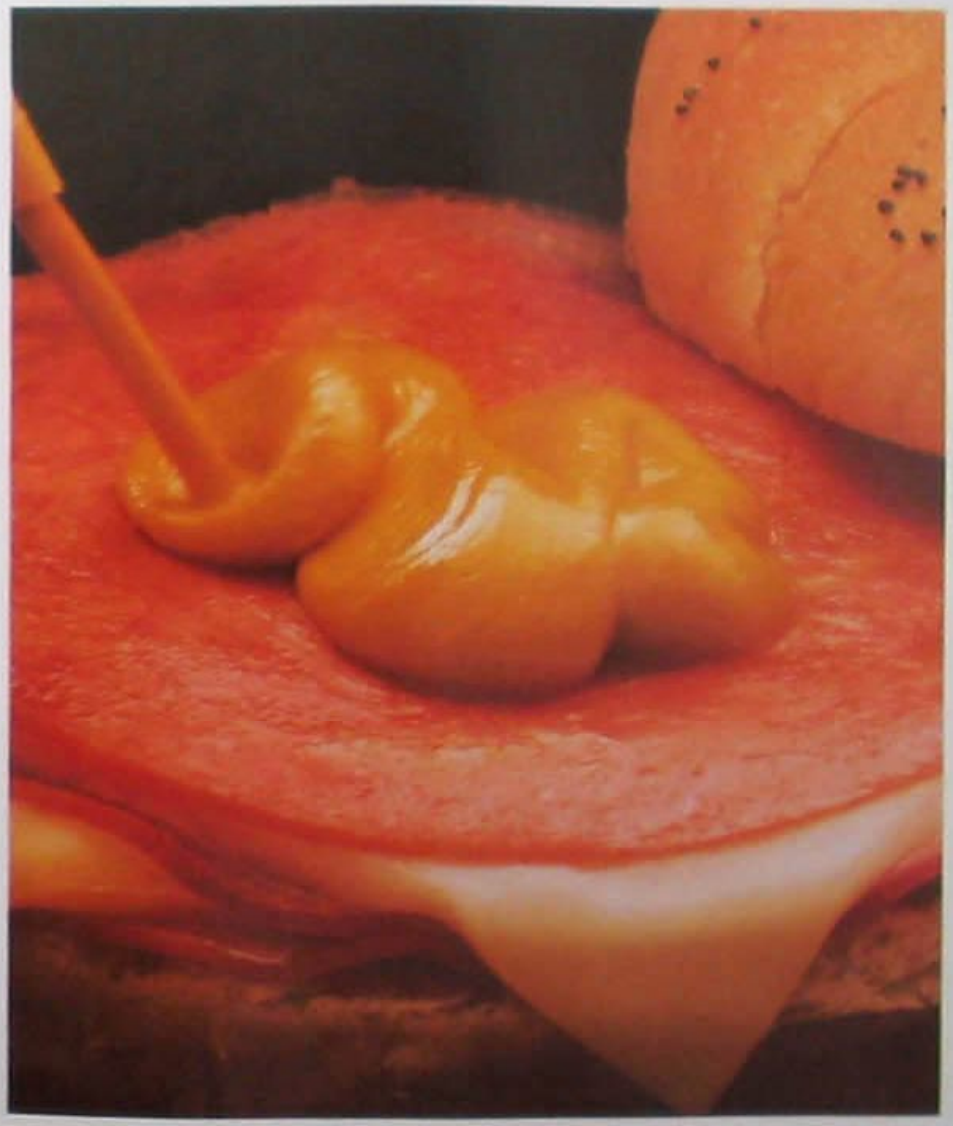
SERVES 1

1 Butter the roll. Top the bottom half with alternate slices of ham and cheese.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until cheese melts.
3 Spread with mustard, replace the top of the roll and serve.

Freezer notes

Freeze unmicrowaved rolls for 2 weeks. To thaw one roll, microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes; serve hot.

Beefy Pittas



Tuna muffins

4 mins

Standing time: none

200g / 7oz can tuna, drained
2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
45ml / 3tbls mayonnaise
½ onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls cucumber relish
30ml / 2tbls chopped stuffed olives, capers or celery
2.5ml / ½tsp made mustard
salt and pepper
4 muffins, split and toasted
2 tomatoes, sliced
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Combine tuna, eggs, mayonnaise, onion, relish, olives and mustard in a bowl. Season to taste and mix well. Divide mixture between the muffin halves. Top each half with tomato and 15ml / 1tbls cheese.

2 Place four muffin halves on a large plate lined with two layers of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until cheese melts, rotating once. Repeat with remaining muffins.

Above: *Tuna Muffins*
Left: *Hot Ham and Cheese Roll*

Sugared fruit and flowers

A tempting selection of candied fruit can only be made more mouthwatering by adding a sugary crystallized finish. Crystallizing flowers is quite an art, but easy when you know how. Try it and see!

Whole candied and crystallized fruit is usually a Christmas treat, but with the help of the microwave there is no reason not to enjoy these delicacies all year round. Crystallized flowers are also made in minutes with the help of the microwave.

Candying: is a preserving process which replaces the liquid in fruit with sugar. There are two methods of achieving this. One is a gradual process which involves soaking fruit in an increasingly strong sugar syrup over a number of days. When the fruit is completely saturated it is dried. Because of its high sugar content, candied fruit can be stored in non air-tight containers, in a cool dry place, for several weeks.

An alternative — and much speedier — method is to cook firm textured fruit or peel in the syrup. Preserved in this way the fruit may remain a little sticky and will not have such a long storage life. Keep this type of candy, which has a

Crystallized Fruit Medley

lower sugar content, in airtight containers.

Crystallizing: this is basically a sugar finish, sprinkled over candied fruit once it has been saturated with the syrup. Either coat the fruit while still damp so the sugar dries to a brittle finish, or sprinkle the dried fruit or peel with sugar to give a 'frosted' appearance.

Individual small, non-poisonous flowers or petals can be crystallized without first undergoing the lengthy candying process. Egg whites and sugar are used to coat the petals which are then dried in just a few minutes in the microwave.

Using candied and crystallized fruit and flowers: Whole candied fruit (see recipe) is delicious eaten with after-dinner coffee, although a little goes a long way. You can also include candied fruit and peel in rich fruit cakes (see recipe page 1608) or try them as a topping for other desserts such as mousse, jellies and trifles. Candied fruit or mixed fruit and peel is readily available from supermarkets if you have no time to make your own.

Crystallized flowers make unusual and attractive decorations for cakes and a whole variety of desserts. Use them imaginatively to add that special touch to a familiar dish.

Crystallized fruit medley

148 mins

Standing time: none

The process of crystallizing fruit takes place over 12 days and the results are well worth it.

822g / 1lb 13oz can peach slices, drained, syrup reserved
1.7kg / 3¾lb sugar
822g / 1lb 13oz can pear halves, drained, syrup reserved
425g / 15oz can red cherries, drained, syrup reserved
175g / 6oz fresh kumquats, thickly sliced
caster sugar, for coating

MAKES ABOUT 1.1kg / 2½lb

1 Day one: make up the peach syrup to 275ml / ½pt with water and pour into a 2.5L / 4½pt dish. Add 225g / 8oz sugar and stir well. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until the mixture is boiling. Stir halfway through. Add the peaches, making sure all the fruit is covered.

2 Repeat the process with the pear syrup and pear halves, using a clean 2.5L / 4½pt dish.

3 Mix the cherries and kumquats together. Make up cherry syrup to 275ml / ½pt with water and repeat process as above. Cover each dish with stretch wrap and leave in a cool place for 24 hours.

4 Day two: keeping the syrups separate, drain into three large bowls and stir 50g / 2oz sugar into each. Microwave each one separately at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, until the sugar dissolves and the syrup boils. Stir halfway through. Pour each syrup back over the fruit and cover.

5 Day three: repeat the same process as day two.

6 Day four: repeat the same process as day two.

7 Day five: keeping the syrups separate, drain into three large bowls and stir 75g / 3oz sugar into each. Microwave each syrup separately at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until boiling, stirring halfway through. Return the fruit to its syrup, stir well and microwave for a further 3-4 minutes until boiling, stirring halfway through. Cover the dishes and leave for 48 hours.

8 Day seven: repeat the same process as day five. Leave to soak for four days. The syrup should then be like clear honey.

9 Day eleven: using a slotted spoon, remove the fruit from the syrup and place on wire racks to drain thoroughly for about 1 hour.

10 Place a piece of greaseproof paper on the floor of the microwave and arrange the pears in a circle on it. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4 minutes, rotating the paper a half turn once. Transfer pears to a wire rack. Repeat the process in two batches with the mixed cherries and kumquats.

11 Coat the pieces of fruit in caster sugar, covering them completely. Cool on wire racks then cover with greaseproof paper and leave for 24 hours.

12 Day twelve: coat the fruit again with caster sugar. If not using immediately, store in a container with greaseproof paper between the layers. Use within 2-4 weeks. Check the fruit regularly.

Cook's notes

The syrup left over from the crystallizing process makes a first class sauce. Pour it over ice cream or pancakes, or use it to glaze fruit for topping cheesecakes, or to sweeten pie fillings.

Candied peel

19 mins

Standing time: none

3 large oranges
1 lemon
1.3L / 2¼pt water, plus 62.5ml / 2½fl oz
150g / 5oz sugar
icing sugar for dusting

MAKES ABOUT 100g / 4oz

Microtips

For orange flavoured cocoa: mix together 225ml / 8fl oz milk and 7.5ml / 1½tsp each cocoa and sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Whisk, add a strip of peel, microwave for another minute.

How to microwave Candied peel

Pare *the peel in strips from the oranges and lemon with a vegetable peeler or zester. Make sure the bitter white pith is not included.*

Combine *425ml / ¾pt water and the peel in a 1L / 1¾pt measuring jug or bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until boiling. Drain.*

Repeat *the process twice, but boil all the peel in 425ml / ¾pt fresh water each time. Rinse the peel, drain on absorbent paper and pat dry.*

Combine *the remaining water and the sugar in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole. Stir in the peel. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes or until the sugar dissolves, stirring every 2 minutes.*

When *the peel is glossy and transparent transfer with a draining spoon to a wire rack to cool. Sift icing sugar all over the peel, then leave until completely cold.*

Store *in an airtight container and use within 1 month. Serve as a dipper for chocolate fondue, or use a strip to flavour a cup of coffee or hot chocolate, or use, chopped, in fruit fillings.*

KEY DUNS

Crystallized Primroses and Rose Petals make colourful cake decorations

Crystallized primroses

4 mins

Standing time: none

These delicate flowers make unusual decorations for cakes and confectionery.

10 primroses, freshly picked
1 egg white, lightly beaten
100g / 4oz caster sugar
extra caster sugar for sprinkling

MAKES 10 CRYSTALLIZED FLOWERS

1 Using a damp cloth, very gently wipe the petals of the flowers clean.
2 Holding the stem, carefully dip each flower in the egg white or paint them carefully all over using a small paintbrush.
3 Allow surplus egg white to drain away before carefully coating the flowers completely in caster sugar.
4 Place a piece of greaseproof paper on the floor of the microwave. Arrange the flowers in a circle on the paper.
5 Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4-5 minutes, turning the flowers over every 2 minutes. Transfer the flowers to a wire rack and allow to cool in a single layer for about 15 minutes.
6 Gently sprinkle caster sugar all over both sides of the petals. Leave until cold then store in an airtight container.

VARIATION
Crystallized violets: use 30 violets instead of the primroses; microwave half at a time as above, using a fresh piece of greaseproof paper for the second batch.

Crystallized rose petals

12 mins

Standing time: none

50 crimson rose petals, freshly picked
1 egg white, lightly beaten
150g / 5oz caster sugar

MAKES 50 CRYSTALLIZED PETALS

1 With a damp cloth, very gently wipe the petals clean. Put the beaten egg white in a bowl, and add the petals a few at a time. Remove them carefully allowing any surplus to drain away. Alternatively, use fish tongs to very carefully dip each petal into the egg white to coat.
2 Dip the petals into the caster sugar coating them evenly on both sides.
3 Place a sheet of greaseproof paper on the floor of the microwave and arrange a third of the petals in a circle on it.
4 Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4 minutes, turning the petals over after every minute. Transfer to a wire rack and leave in a single layer to dry for 15 minutes.
5 Using a fresh piece of greaseproof paper each time, microwave the remaining petals in two batches, as above.
6 Sprinkle caster sugar over both sides of the petals. Leave until cold, then store in an airtight container, layered between sheets of greaseproof paper.

Cook's notes

Choose only edible flowers with only a few petals, such as freesias, primulas, primroses or violets for crystallizing. Do not use the flowers from bulbs as these are often poisonous.

These crystallized flowers will keep well for up to two weeks, if stored in an airtight container, but will begin to soften after this.

Candied fruit ring cake

35 mins

Standing time: 30 minutes

For a festive occasion, serve the cake in wedges, arranged around a cluster of candied fruit

50g / 2oz ginger biscuits, crushed
350g / 12oz mixed candied fruit, chopped or sliced
50g / 2oz split almonds, roughly chopped
175g / 6oz butter or margarine, softened
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
200g / 7oz plain flour
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
7.5ml / 1½tsp ground mixed spice
4 eggs, beaten

SERVES 10

1 Grease a 2L / 3½pt ring mould and coat the sides with the biscuit crumbs, tipping out any excess. Line the base with a ring of greased greaseproof paper. Arrange the candied fruit and almonds decoratively in an even layer on the greaseproof paper.
2 Cream the butter or margarine with the sugar until pale and creamy. Sift the flour with the baking powder and mixed spice.

3 Beat the eggs into the creamed mixture a third at a time, adding a little of the flour each time to prevent the mixture from curdling Fold in the remaining flour with a metal spoon.
4 Carefully spoon the creamed mixture evenly over the fruit and nuts. Smooth the top. Microwave, uncovered, at 20-30% (Defrost) for 35-40 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean but the top is still slightly moist and sticky.
5 Leave to stand for 30 minutes before turning out on to a wire rack to cool. If wished, store, wrapped in foil, in an airtight container. Serve within 2 days.

Microtips

If time is short, Candied Fruit Ring Cake can be microwaved at 100% (High) for 6½-7½ minutes. Reduce the candied fruit to 225g / 8oz and use 40g / 1½oz split almonds to allow a little more room for the cake to rise with the extra power. Stand for 5 minutes before turning out. Cooked this way, the cake is best served on the day it is made.

Candied pineapple

16 mins

Standing time: none

822g / 1lb 13oz pineapple slices in natural juice
225g / 8oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls golden syrup
caster sugar for coating

MAKES 8 SLICES

1 Drain pineapple, reserving 62ml / 2½fl oz juice. Place juice in a 2.8L / 5pt deep, oblong dish with sugar and syrup. Stir well.
2 Arrange four pineapple slices in the mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes until sugar dissolves and slices are glossy and transparent at edges. Turn over every 4 minutes.
3 Transfer the slices to a wire rack to cool. (They will become more transparent as they stand.) Repeat with remaining slices.
4 When the slices are completely cold, coat them on both sides with caster sugar. Cover with greaseproof paper and leave on the rack for at least 24 hours to dry. Coat again on both sides (the slices will be slightly sticky).
5 Store, layered with greaseproof paper, in an airtight container. Use within 2 weeks.

Mini microwaves

Won over to the ease of microwaving, but worried about space in your kitchen? Here is the answer: the compact microwave slots into the smallest kitchen and works at top efficiency.

Compact microwaves offer all the facilities of a high power 600 watt cooker — built into a much smaller casing. Small machines have been available in the past, but with less power. The new compacts, offering 600 watts of power*, actually operate at relatively increased efficiency as the small cavity leaves less room for the microwaves to travel.

The body of a compact microwave is small, because the latest technology has been used to enable the magnetron to be built in to a much smaller space, leaving more room for the cavity. Even though the cavity is smaller, it is still large enough to take most microwave containers: up to a 2.8-3.4L / 5-6pt casserole for example. Operating with a stirrer fan facility, rather than a turntable, also leaves more work space. However, there are some containers which do not fit — the larger type of browning dish for instance.

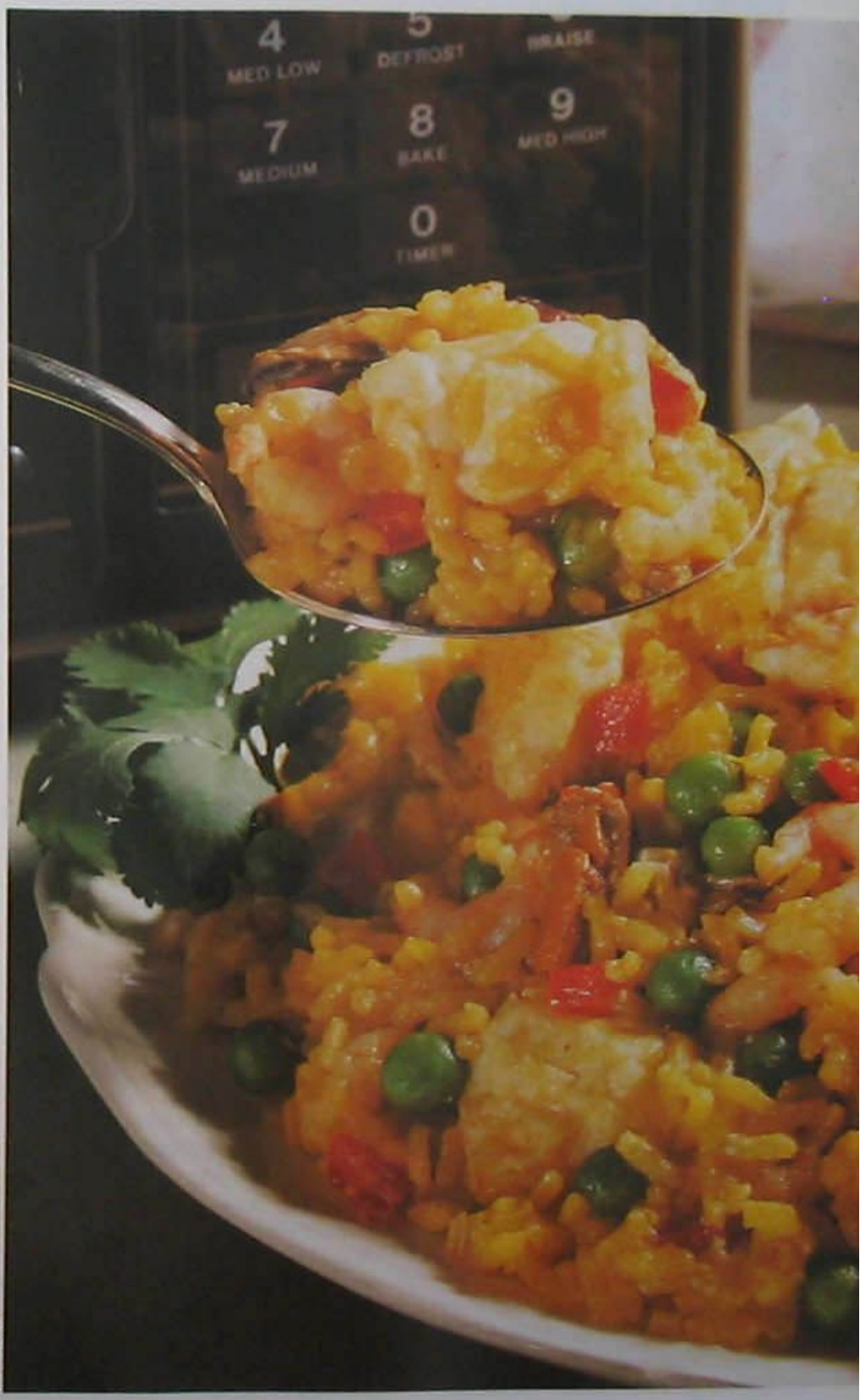
Different models and makes of compact microwave offer different facilities, from the basics to variable power, memory, heat and hold and even combination microwave and conventional oven.

Why choose a compact?

Space is an important factor when planning the equipment you want in the kitchen: the compact microwave scores top marks when it comes to easy housing. Site it on a table or work surface or, for extra portability, keep it on a trolley.

The compact microwave weighs less than a conventional machine so can be carried or trollied from room to room. In summer, try moving outside to cook.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND 600 watt compact ovens may not be available.



RAY DUNS

Summer Fish Salad

Summer fish salad

20 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tlbs olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
350g / 12oz long-grain rice
700ml / 1¼pt boiling fish stock
2.5ml / ½tsp turmeric
100g / 4oz frozen peas
225g / 8oz monkfish tail fillet*, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 canned pimiento, diced
salt and pepper
175g / 7oz jar mussels, drained
100g / 4oz peeled prawns

FRENCH DRESSING
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
30ml / 2tbls white wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

VARIATION
Serve the salad hot. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 10-12 minutes. Stir twice.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use gemfish or ling fillets.

How to microwave Summer fish salad

Place *the oil, onion and garlic in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover, microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, until soft. Stir in rice and stock. Add turmeric and stir well to blend.*

Cover; *microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir, reduce to 70% (Medium-High) for 9-11 minutes, until liquid is absorbed. Stir twice. Add peas 5 minutes before end of cooking.*

Place *monkfish in a small shallow dish. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Rotate a half turn twice. Cool, drain and stir into rice with pimiento; season.*

Combine *the ingredients for the dressing in a screw-top jar. Shake until emulsified. Stir the mussels and prawns into the cold salad. Pour over the dressing and stir to coat.*

Pros and cons of compact cookers

Advantages:
- Space saving — ideal for the small kitchen or bedsitter.
- Portable — easy to move to another room or even outside.
- High power: 600 watts that work fast in the small cavity.
- Designed to take most microwave containers — up to 2.8-3.4L / 5-6pt dish.

Disadvantages:
- Less cavity space means some containers cannot be used — a large browning dish or a large round roasting rack for example.
- Most containers must be removed from the cooker when the food needs to be stirred.
- No turntable facility is available in current models.

Microtips

All the recipes here can be made in a conventional microwave, but be prepared to adjust cooking times. Allow a little more or less time, depending on the power of the model you have. Always check after the minimum time given.

Cook's notes

To check that the Celebration Poussin are cooked, pierce the inner thigh of each bird with a sharp knife or skewer. If the juices are tinged with pink at all, return the birds to the microwave and cook for a further 3-5 minutes at 100% (High). Test again to make sure the poultry are completely cooked through.

Celebration poussins

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

The compact microwave caters admirably for special occasions and this dish really fits the bill for that special dinner for two.

2 × 450g / 1lb oven-ready poussins

STUFFING
4 spring onions, sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz semi-dried apricots, chopped
50g / 2oz semi-dried prunes, stoned and chopped
50g / 2oz wholewheat breadcrumbs
25g / 1oz raisins
25g / 1oz blanched almonds, chopped
salt and pepper to taste

GLAZE
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls honey

SERVES 2

1 Place the onions, celery and butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in the apricots, prunes, breadcrumbs, raisins, almonds and seasoning.
2 Fill the cavities of the poussins with the fruit stuffing. Place the birds on a roasting rack, breast side down. Combine the soy sauce and honey and brush half over the poussins.
3 Cover the birds loosely with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-24 minutes, or until cooked (see Cook's notes, opposite). Rearrange and turn the poussins over halfway through microwaving, brushing the breasts with the remaining glaze.
4 Cover the cooked birds loosely with foil and leave to stand for 5 minutes, then serve.

VARIATION
If poussins are unavailable, use a 900g / 2lb oven-ready chicken instead. Microwaving time is the same.

Celebration Poussins

Saucy apricot sponge

9 mins

Standing time: none

375g / 13oz can apricot halves in fruit juice
2 large eggs, separated
175g / 6oz caster sugar
250ml / 8fl oz half cream
grated zest of 1 orange
20ml / 4tsp plain flour
sifted icing sugar for dusting

SERVES 4

1 Drain the apricots and reserve the juice. Place the apricots, cut side down, in a single layer in a 1.4L / 2½pt dish.
2 Using an electric whisk, beat the egg yolks and sugar together in a large bowl until thick and airy. Stir in the half cream, orange zest and 30ml / 2tbls of the reserved fruit juice.
3 Sift the flour three times, then carefully fold into the mixture. Using spotlessly clean beaters, whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks and fold into the mixture.
4 Pour the mixture over the apricots and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-9 minutes, rotating the dish four times during microwaving.
5 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-2 minutes until the centre is firm to the touch. If wished, brown the surface under a hot grill. Sprinkle with icing sugar and serve immediately, with thick cream, if wished.

Tangy barbecue steak

14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb rump steak, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed of fat
1 onion, sliced into rings

TANGY BARBECUE MARINADE
30ml / 2tbls honey
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
60ml / 4tbls light soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls red wine
5ml / 1tsp grated ginger root
1 garlic clove, crushed
60ml / 4tbls thick barbecue sauce

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the marinade ingredients and blend thoroughly.
2 Cut the steak into four equal serving portions and place in a single layer in a large shallow dish. Pour over the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6-8 hours turning occasionally.
3 When ready to cook, add the onion rings to the dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, until the meat is cooked to taste, turning the meat over halfway through microwaving. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes before serving.

Bedsitter bake

21¼ mins

Standing time: none

When cramped for space in the kitchen a compact microwave is the answer. If money is a bit tight too, this is a nourishing yet inexpensive dish.

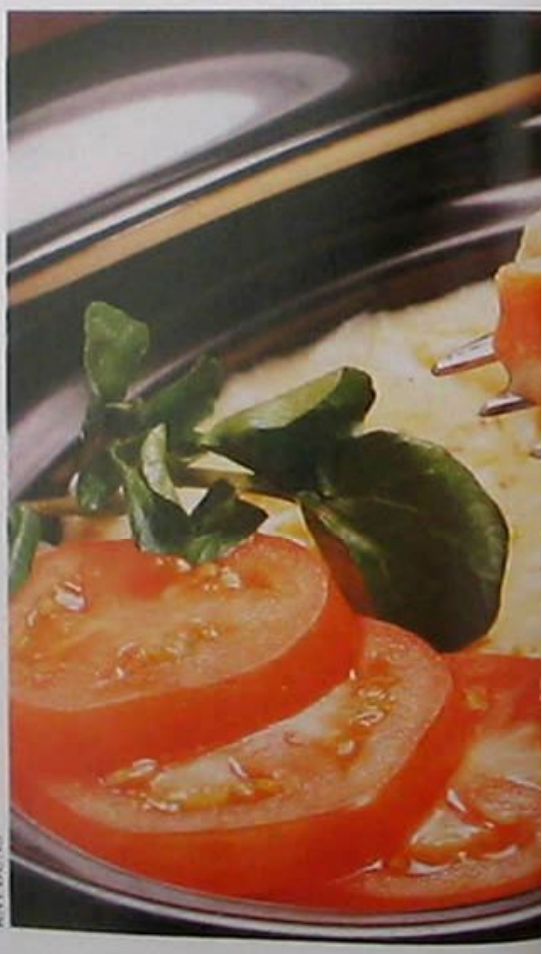
75g / 3oz wholewheat macaroni
700ml / 1¼pt boiling water
salt and pepper
½ × 275g / 10oz packet mixed frozen vegetables

CHEESE SAUCE
15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
2.5ml / ½tsp wholegrain mustard
1 tomato, sliced

SERVES 1

1 Place the macaroni, boiling water and a pinch of salt in a 1.7L /

Left: *Tangy Barbecue Steak*
Below: *Bedsitter Bake*



RAY DUNS

3pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then reduce to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 6-8 minutes; drain.

2 Place the vegetables in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, then drain.

3 Melt butter in a covered 575ml / 1pt jug at 100% (High) for 15-25 seconds. Stir in the flour, then slowly stir in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, whisking vigorously twice. Season. Beat in cheese and mustard.

4 Layer vegetables and macaroni, in a deep 1.1L / 2pt serving dish. Arrange the tomato slices on top and pour over the cheese sauce. Shake gently to distribute the sauce evenly, and microwave, uncovered at 70% (Medium-High) for 2½-3 minutes, until hot.

Bedsitter bake for two: double all the ingredients. Microwave the pasta at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then at 70% (Medium-High) for 8-10 minutes, and the vegetables for 10 minutes. Microwave the sauce at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Assemble dish and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 4-5 minutes.

RAY DUNS

Campers potatoes

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 × 225g / 8oz baking potatoes, scrubbed and pricked
75ml / 3fl oz milk
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1 egg, separated
salt and pepper to taste
15g / ½oz Parmesan cheese, grated
paprika, to sprinkle

SERVES 4

Campers Potatoes

1 Place the potatoes 2.5cm / 1in apart on the floor of the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes. Rearrange once. Wrap and stand for 5 minutes.

2 Slice the top off each potato and scoop out the centres. Place the flesh in a bowl. Add the milk, butter, cheese, egg yolk and seasoning and mash well.

3 Whisk the egg white to stiff peaks, then fold into potato mixture. Spoon into shells.

4 Sprinkle with Parmesan and paprika, then microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; turn once.

Grains for goodness

Go for grains to beat your hunger pangs — they're easy to cook, full of goodness, tasty and satisfying; what's more, they are versatile enough to serve as a main meal, side dish or salad.

Grains are the seeds of cereal plants — of wheat, rye, oats, barley, maize and millet. As a measure of their goodness, grains form the staple diet of races throughout the world — rice in China, cornmeal in Mexico and couscous in North African countries.

Using grains

With today's emphasis on healthy eating all sorts of grains are readily available. A selection, including familiar favourites as well as more unusual kinds, is shown opposite and used in the recipes on the following pages.

All grains are inexpensive — remarkably versatile and — perhaps most important to the busy cook — wonderfully easy to cook, particularly in the microwave.

Try serving them with a main meal; their pleasant, rather bland taste is a perfect foil for meat, fish or vegetables. They are also ideal with sauced dishes as they readily soak up the juices.

Alternatively, cook them in a stew, or use them to make exciting pilaffs or vegetarian dishes.

Make sure you store grains in a cool, dry place; they absorb moisture and tend to go rancid.

Microwaving grains

All grains can be cooked successfully in the microwave. It's not faster than conventional cooking, but you'll find there is less mess, and you will always get good, fluffy results. Use a large container for cooking, to allow room for swelling, and stop the water boiling over. Keep an eye on the grains and add more boiling water if needed. At the end of the cooking time, check for doneness — most grains will look translucent when cooked, and the individual grains should separate easily. For details on microwaving rice, see Part 9, page 248.

Sunny Couscous

Nutrition Notes

High in fibre, yet low in fat and calories (there are only 136Cal / 590 kJ in 100g / 4oz cooked brown rice), whole, unrefined grains are packed with starchy carbohydrates — the kind that leave you feeling satisfied. They also contain B vitamins and, when combined with vegetables they provide protein too. If you are cooking for health, choose whole, unrefined grains.

Sunny couscous

3 mins

Standing time: 1 min

350ml / 12fl oz water
225ml / 8fl oz unsweetened orange juice
350g / 12oz couscous
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped blanched almonds
15ml / 1tbls honey
30ml / 2tbls unsweetened apple juice
pinch of ground cinnamon

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl. Leave to soak for about 10 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, until hot; fork halfway through to separate the grains. Leave to stand, covered, for 1 minute. Serve with a spicy stew or casserole.

Garlic rice and pasta

24½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

15g / ½oz polyunsaturated margarine
100g / 4oz brown rice
50g / 2oz spaghetti, broken into short lengths
350ml / 12fl oz hot water
1 spring onion, sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Mix the margarine, rice and spaghetti in a 2.5L / 3pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, until sizzling. Stir after 2 minutes, then every 10 seconds Watch carefully to avoid burning.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the parsley. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 20-25 minutes, or until tender. Add parsley and stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Toss and serve.

PETER REILLY

A guide to grains

Rice *is perhaps the most popular. Choose long-grain rice for pilaffs and side dishes and round-grain rice for puddings. If you are cooking for health, always choose brown rice as this retains valuable fibre. It has a characteristic nutty flavour and a slightly chewy texture.*

Bulgar *or bulghar, which is also known as cracked wheat, is wheat that has been cracked, steamed and toasted. Cook it in casseroles or simply soak and drain it and use it as a crunchy salad base or a plain accompaniment.*

Barley *is good in stews or soups, and makes an unusual pilaff (see recipe, page 1616). Cold it is an ideal base for a salad — it's especially good flavoured with mint and onion. Choose pot or pearl barley, the unrefined type, which may have less goodness.*

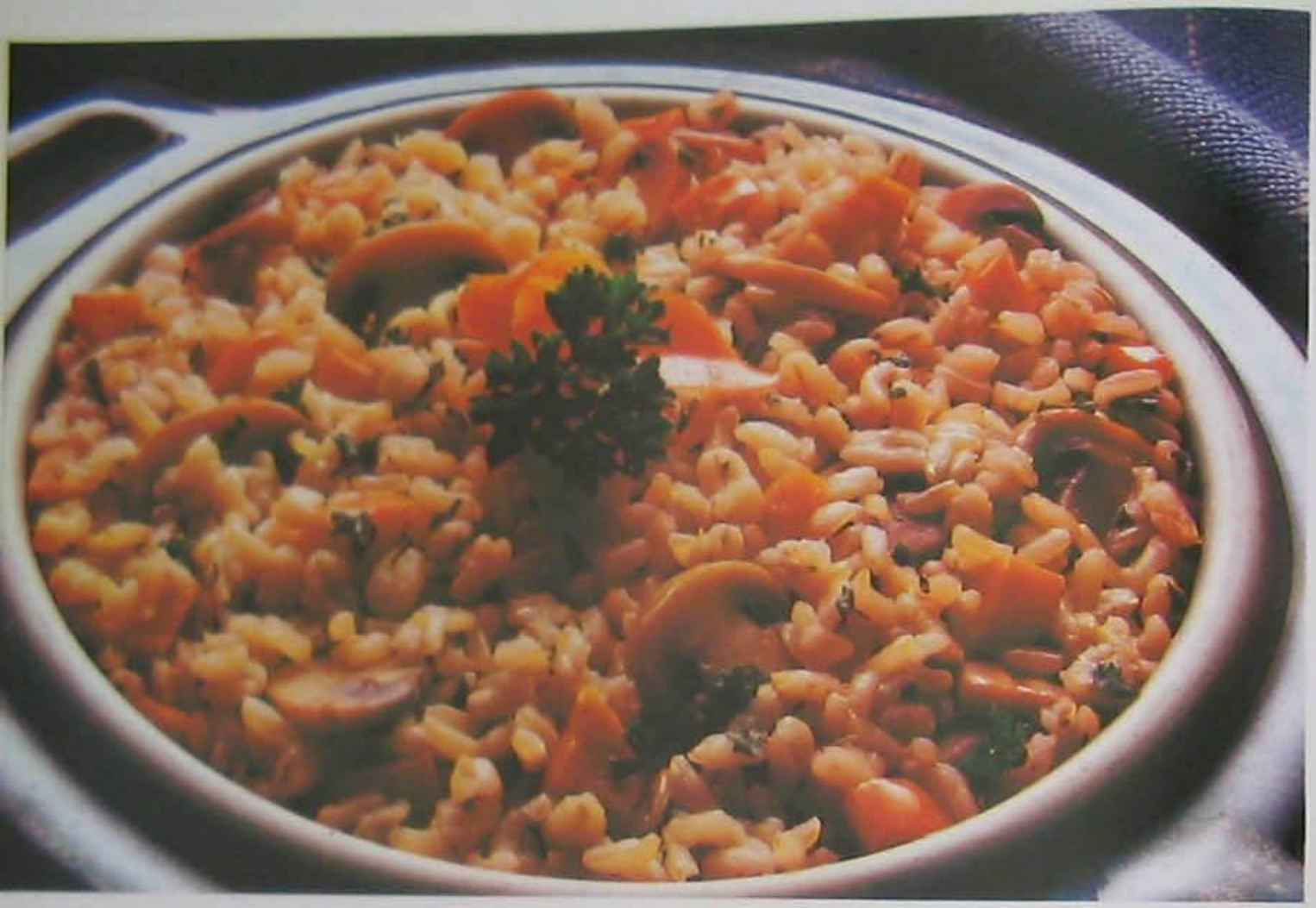
Buckwheat *or groats is the cracked grain of a strongly flavoured type of corn. Use it in meat dishes or in casseroles — it's flavour is generally too strong for fish. In Russia it is also used to make a type of pastry and baked with eggs or butter.*

Cornmeal *or polenta is made from ground maize. It has a rich yellow colour and a slightly sweet taste. It is used to make bread and cakes, porridge and poultry stuffing as well as the savoury dishes associated with other grains. It's also the main ingredient in the famous Italian Polenta (recipe, page 1618).*

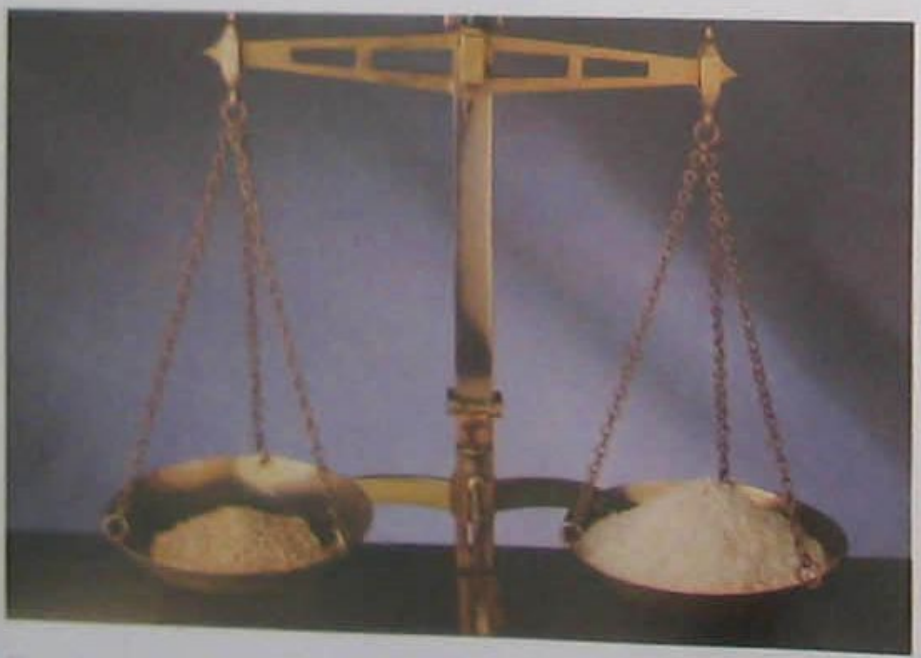
Couscous *is made from wheat flour, millet or occasionally, crushed rice. Traditionally it is soaked then steamed over a spicy stew of meat or vegetables. It can also be used in casseroles. Look for easy-to-cook varieties which require less preparation than the more traditional brands.*

Oatmeal *is a meal of husked, ground oats, most often used to make porridge. It can be used to thicken soups, or instead of breadcrumbs as a coating ingredient for fish or meat — traditionally, herrings. It can be used in puddings, too.*

Millet *is very versatile, and can be used as a side dish or cereal, in soups or breads and puddings. As it is rich in vitamins, and also a good source of protein, it's one of the most nourishing grains — it tastes surprisingly good in a range of sweet and savoury dishes, too.*



The fibre factor



You will need to eat four times as much white rice as brown to give you the same amount of fibre. To get the same amount of the vitamin niacin, you will need to eat six times as much white, and to get the same amount of the B group vitamins, you would need to eat an amazing twenty times as much.

Two Grain Pilaf

Two grain pilaf

43 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz pot or pearl barley
50g / 2oz long-grain rice
450ml / 16fl oz hot chicken or vegetable stock
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 small carrot, diced
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 38-42 minutes, or until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Microtips

Microwaving is an excellent way of reheating a whole range of grain-based dishes. The dish does not become stodgy, or lose any of its flavour. Unless directed otherwise, add 15-30ml / 1-2tbls water to the dish to be reheated to create some steam to keep the food moist and prevent drying out.

Barley and beans

45 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz polyunsaturated margarine
1 carrot, sliced into 6mm / ¼in slices
4 spring onions, sliced
450ml / 16fl oz hot chicken or vegetable stock
50g / 2oz pot or pearl barley
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
425g / 15oz can kidney or cannellini beans, drained

SERVES 4

1 Combine the margarine, carrot and onions in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl or casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes or until tender, stirring once.
2 Add all the remaining ingredients except the beans, mix thoroughly, but carefully, and re-cover. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 39-43 minutes, or until the liquid is absorbed and barley is tender.
3 Stir in the beans and re-cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until piping hot.

Cook's notes

When a recipe calls for a certain amount of a cooked grain, say, for example, 100g / 4oz cooked rice, estimate this by dividing the cooked weight by approximately a third to a half to get the raw weight. The grains become heavier during cooking as they absorb moisture.

Herby bulgar pilaf

11 mins

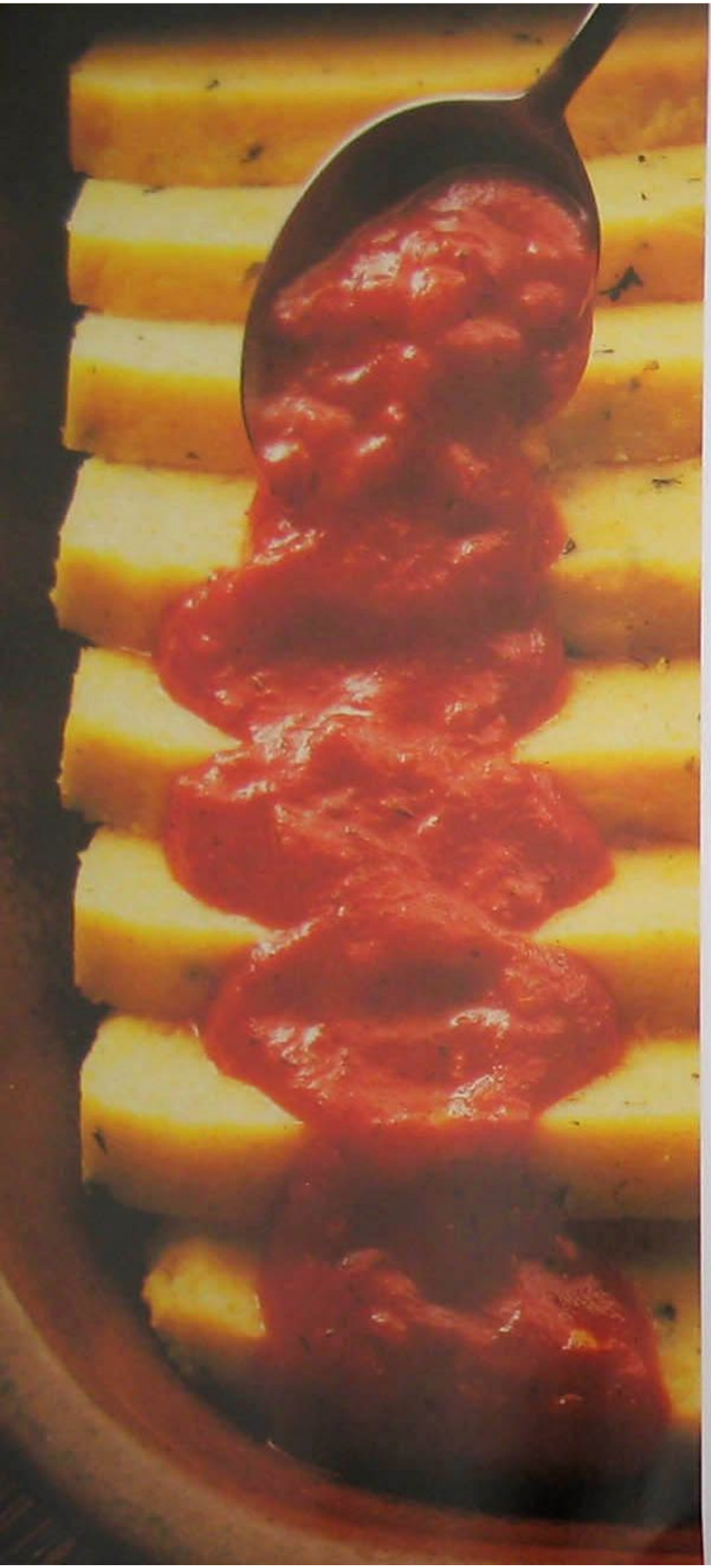
Standing time: none

700ml / 1¼pt water
175g / 6oz bulgar
1 carrot, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp dried or 15ml / 1tbls fresh thyme
salt and pepper
25g / 1oz polyunsaturated margarine
100g / 4oz frozen peas
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 8

Cheesy Hominy (page 1619)

1 Microwave the water in a large jug at 100% (High) for 5-9 minutes, until boiling. Put the bulgar in a bowl and pour over the boiling water. Cover and leave to stand for 30 minutes. Drain, press out excess moisture, then set aside.
2 In a 1.7L / 3pt bowl or casserole mix together the carrot, onion, parsley, garlic, thyme, pepper to taste and margarine. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring once.
3 Stir in the bulgar, peas, Parmesan and salt to taste and mix well. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes or until heated through. Serve with roast lamb or lamb chops.



Polenta

25 mins

Standing time: none

450ml / 16fl oz hot water
125ml / 4fl oz vegetable stock
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
pinch of dried marjoram
salt and pepper
175g / 6oz cornmeal
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
25g / 1oz polyunsaturated margarine

TOMATO SAUCE
397g / 14oz can tomatoes
142g / 5oz can tomato paste or purée
5ml / 1tsp sugar
30ml / 2tbls red wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls orange juice

SERVES 6-8

1 Mix together the water, stock, parsley, marjoram and salt and pepper in a 2.5L / 4pt bowl or casserole. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes or until boiling.

2 Slowly whisk in the cornmeal, Parmesan and margarine and stir until the margarine melts. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 6-8 minutes, or until the mixture thickens and bubbles, stirring twice.

3 Spread the polenta evenly in a lightly oiled 20 × 12.5cm / 8 × 5in loaf dish. Leave to cool for 30 minutes, until set but still warm.

4 Meanwhile, make the tomato sauce. Place all the ingredients in a bowl, breaking up the tomatoes a little. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, until the sauce is reduced and thick. Season to taste.

5 Run a knife around the edge of the polenta. Invert the loaf dish on to a board, and shake briskly to unmould. Cut the polenta into 16 even slices and overlap in a 23cm / 9in square baking dish. Pour over the tomato sauce, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-7 minutes, or until the polenta is well heated through.

Polenta

Microtips

If wished, store half the polenta and tomato sauce in the refrigerator for two or three days. To reheat, overlap the eight slices and cover with the tomato sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until hot.

Cheesy hominy

17½ mins

Standing time: none

Hominy was first used by the American Indians as a staple starchy food. Nowadays it is particularly popular in the American south, where, when coarsely ground, it is known as the popular hominy grits. You will find hominy in some supermarkets and delicatessens. Serve this dish as a brunch, with fresh bread.

25g / 1oz polyunsaturated margarine
4 spring onions, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
400ml / 14fl oz hot water
75g / 3oz hominy
1 tomato, seeded and chopped
25g / 1oz reduced-fat Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Place the margarine, onions and garlic in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until tender.
2 Season to taste and add the water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes or until the water is boiling. Stir in the hominy and tomato, mixing well.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12-15 minutes, or until the liquid has been absorbed and the hominy is tender, stirring once. Add cheese and stir until melted.

Cinnamon raisin rice

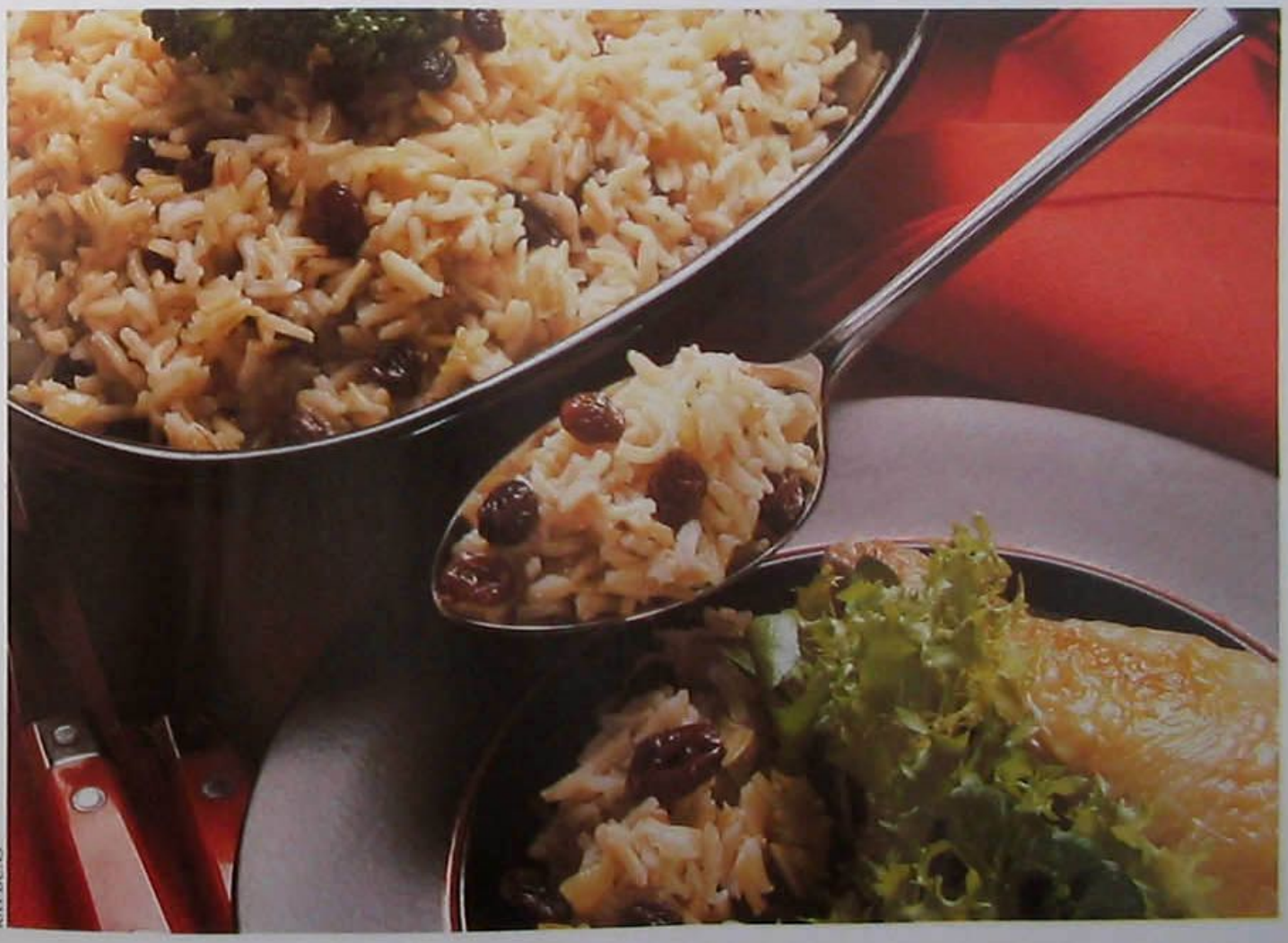
27 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

15ml / 1tbls sunflower oil
1 onion, finely chopped
225g / 8oz brown rice
575ml / 1pt boiling water
2 cinnamon sticks
75g / 3oz raisins
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the oil and onion in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl for 3 minutes at 100% (High), or until the onion is tender.
2 Stir in the rice and water and add the cinnamon sticks. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 20-25 minutes, stirring 2-3 times.
3 Stir in the raisins and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, until heated through.



Cinnamon Raisin Rice

RAY DUNS

STAR RECIPE

Marinated stuffed steak

For a dinner party or family celebration, build a meal around this meltingly tender, vegetable-stuffed meat with a tomato baste. The microwave cooks it to perfection — and in under an hour.

Even the tenderest cut of beef benefits from overnight marinating. In just a few hours, the meat fibres soften and absorb the flavours, becoming even more succulent.

Although the meat may be very tender, do not be tempted to cook the rolled steak without first marinating for the suggested time, as this is essential for the meat to absorb the flavours of the marinade.

Cut the rolled steak into 12 / ½in slices for serving to show off the vegetable filling. Serve with the juices from the dish mixed with the baste. Accompany it with baby new potatoes, cooked in their skins, carrots and a green vegetable.

Depending on your taste, you may like to incorporate 2.5ml / ½tsp mild chilli powder or the same amount of ground cumin into the marinade to give a more spicy flavour to the meat.

Microtips

The meat will continue to cook during the standing time. If you prefer your meat slightly underdone, remove the steak from the cooker slightly before the end of the cooking time given in the recipe and test after standing — it can always be cooked a little more but cannot be redeemed if overcooked.

Marinated stuffed steak

26½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g-675g / 1-1½lb topside of beef
125ml / 4fl oz tomato ketchup or sauce
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
5ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
1 garlic clove, finely chopped

STUFFING
1 potato, grated
10 spring onions, chopped
225g / 8oz cooked green beans, chopped
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

How to microwave Marinated stuffed steak

Pound *the steak well, using the edge of a saucer or a meat mallet to tenderize it. Combine the tomato ketchup, purée, Worcestershire sauce and garlic in a small bowl.*

Spread *half of the tomato mixture in a large, 23cm / 9in square dish. Place the meat on top, then spread with the remaining tomato mixture. Cover and refrigerate overnight.*

Scrape *the marinade from both sides of the meat and spoon into a 575ml / 1pt jug. Reserve the tomato marinade while preparing and stuffing the steak roll.*

Combine *the potatoes and spring onions in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until hot, stirring once. Stir in the beans and spread over the meat.*

Roll *up the meat, taking care not to let the stuffing escape at the sides. Secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Place in a 23cm / 9in square dish and cover with the reserved marinade, spreading it evenly over the surface of the meat.*

Cover *with stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 20-25 minutes, or until tender, basting and turning over once. Stand for 5 minutes, covered.*

Easy-bake biscuits

When you have to cook for an occasion — a party tea or a school fête, for instance — what better than to make a batch of crunchy cookies? It takes just minutes in the microwave.

Easy-bake biscuits are popular, easy to produce in quantity and keep well.

When catering for a crowd, the easiest way is to cook a slab of biscuit mixture, then cut it into slices for serving. All the biscuits here are made in one dish — in some of the recipes the ingredients are mixed in the dish too, keeping washing-up to a minimum. To serve, cut the cooked mixture into squares, slices or bars as you like. Remember — these mixtures are rich, so small mouthfuls will be quite enough. Let the bars cool before cutting. If you leave them

Left to right: *Chocolate Crispies, Marshmallow Crispies, Peanut Crumble Bars.*

too long, however, they may become too firm and crisp, so that the pieces shatter rather than slice cleanly. Should this happen, let the microwave come to your aid — simply pop the dish back into the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to soften the mixture.

If not serving the biscuits immediately, store them in an airtight container or, for a crisper texture, in the refrigerator. All the cookies here keep well for up to 1 week — should anyone be able to resist them that long.

Marshmallow crispies

2¼ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter or margarine, cut in small pieces
40 white marshmallows
100g / 4oz puffed rice cereal
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 36 SQUARES

VARIATIONS
Reduce the puffed rice to 75g / 3oz and add 25g / 1oz chopped nuts. For Chocolate crispies, add 50g / 2oz chocolate chips with the marshmallows, and stir thoroughly until the ingredients are well blended.

Peanut crumble bars

7 mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz butter or margarine, cut in small pieces
175g / 6oz soft light brown sugar
75g / 3oz peanut butter
50g / 2oz unsalted peanuts
2 eggs, beaten
90g / 3½oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
75g / 3oz chocolate chips

MAKES 12-16 BARS

1 Place butter in a 20.5cm / 8in square dish and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, until melted. Stir in all the remaining ingredients, except the chocolate chips.
2 Spread mixture evenly in the dish and shield the corners with small triangles of foil.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, until top is no longer wet. Remove foil when the centre starts to dry.
4 Use the chocolate chips to coat the top (see Step 2, below). Leave to cool and set, then cut into small squares.

How to microwave Peanut crumble bars

Combine *the ingredients as in stage 1. Spread evenly into the dish and microwave as directed in stage 3.*

Sprinkle *the chips over the hot biscuit mixture. When melted, spread over the surface. Leave to set.*

How to microwave Marshmallow crispies

Place *butter in a 20.5cm / 8in square dish. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until melted. Stir in marshmallows.*

Microwave, *uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, to melt the marshmallows, stirring after 1 minute. Then stir until smooth.*

Add *puffed rice in two batches, stirring with a fork to coat them. Stir in vanilla. Press down evenly and leave to cool. Cut in squares.*

Coconut coffee squares

6½ mins

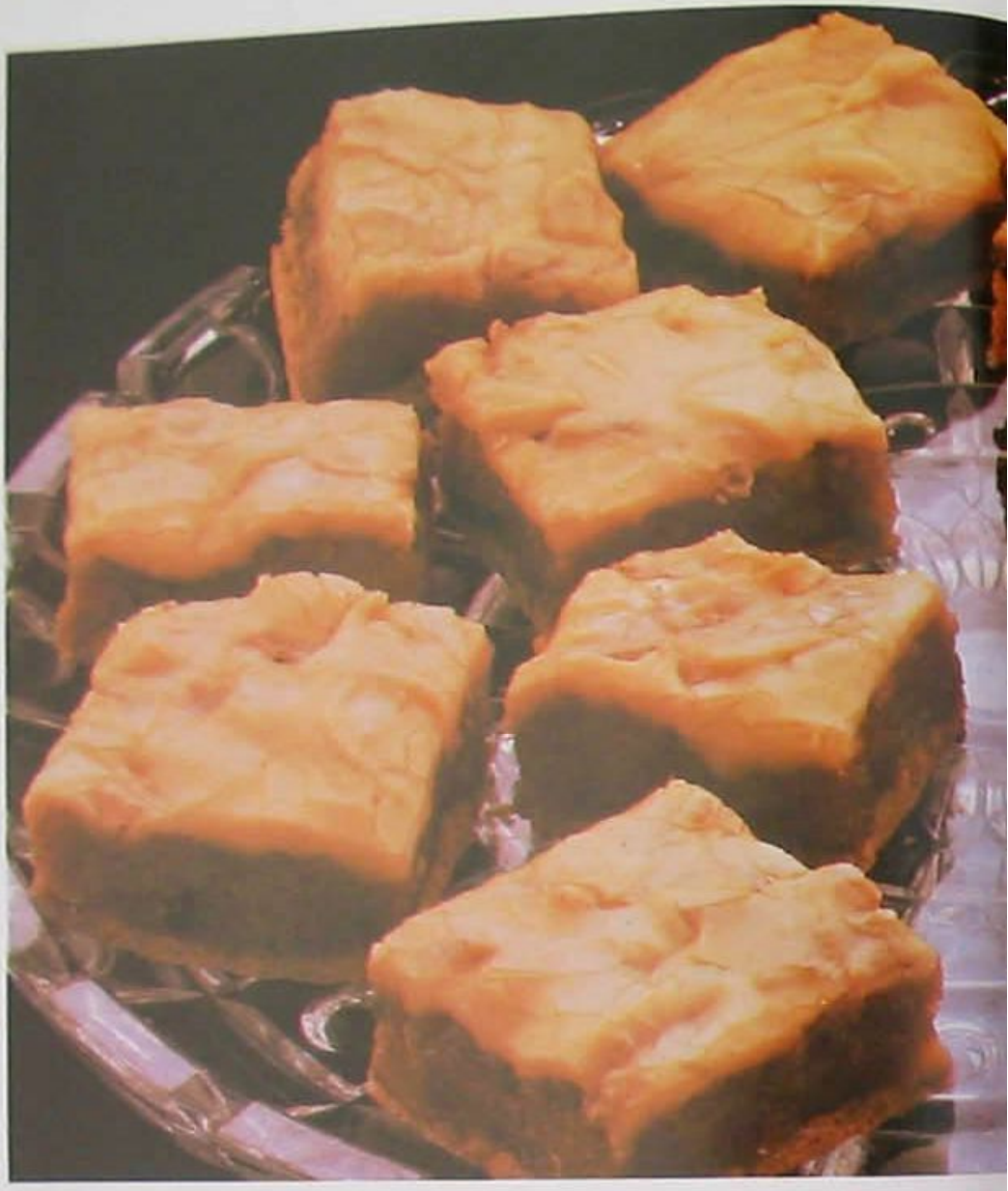
Standing time: none

225g / 8oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, cut in small pieces
3 eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz brown sugar
125ml / 4fl oz milk
100g / 4oz desiccated coconut
100g / 4oz walnuts or hazelnuts, coarsely chopped
few drops of vanilla flavouring

COFFEE ICING
25g / 1oz butter or margarine, cut in small pieces
30ml / 2tbls strong black coffee
few drops of vanilla flavouring
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted

MAKES 24 SQUARES

1 Coarsely crush half the biscuits and spread evenly over the base of a 32.5 × 23cm / 13 × 9in baking dish. Press down firmly. Finely crush the remaining biscuits.
2 Put the butter into a bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until melted. Beat in the eggs, sugar and milk; combine thoroughly. Continue as shown below.



How to microwave Coconut coffee squares

Microwave, *uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, until very hot, but not boiling, and starting to thicken at the sides. Stir twice. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 3-5 minutes more. Stir every minute.*

Stir *the reserved biscuits, the coconut, nuts and vanilla into the mixture (which will not be smooth). Place spoonfuls on top of the crumbs in the dish and carefully spread it over them. Leave to cool while you make the icing.*

Put *butter into a bowl, cover and microwave for 30-45 seconds at 100% (High) until melted. Stir in the coffee and vanilla and enough sugar to make a spreading consistency. Spread over the cooled mixture. Cut when cold.*

Chocolate pecan bars

3 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb chocolate-flavoured cake covering or compound
100g / 4oz peanut butter
50g / 2oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
100g / 4oz pecans, roughly chopped
few drops of vanilla flavouring

MAKES 36 BARS

1 Break the chocolate covering into small pieces and place in a bowl with the peanut butter. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes, until quite soft, stirring once during cooking.
2 Stir the mixture until completely smooth, then carefully stir in the crushed biscuits, chopped pecans and vanilla flavouring.
3 Line a 23cm / 9in square baking tin with greaseproof paper. Pour in the mixture and spread it evenly in to the corners of the tin.
4 Leave in a cool place to set. When firm, cut into bars or squares. Store in an airtight container.

VARIATIONS
For a gingery flavour, substitute ginger-flavoured biscuits for the digestives. Omit the vanilla flavouring, and add 2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger.
For Pecan Fruit Bars, add 50g / 2oz roughly chopped raisins to the mixture with the biscuits, pecans and vanilla flavouring.

Left: *Coconut Coffee Squares*
Right: *Choc-nut Fingers*

Choc-nut fingers

5½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

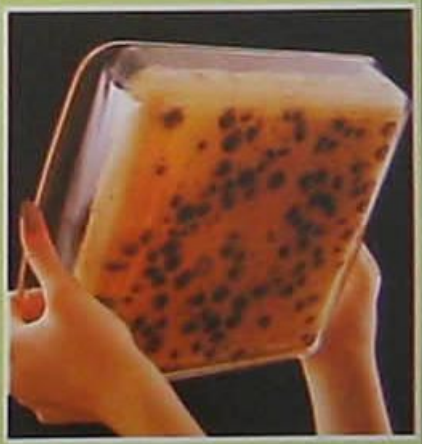
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, cut in small pieces
100g / 4oz demerara sugar
90ml / 6tbls bran
60ml / 4tbls wheatgerm
75ml / 5tbls cornflakes, crushed
50g / 2oz chopped nuts

TOPPING
75g / 3oz milk chocolate chips
75g / 3oz peanut butter

MAKES 16 SQUARES

1 Put the butter into a large bowl and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.
2 Stir in the sugar, then the remaining ingredients, mixing evenly. Press into a 20cm / 8in square baking dish.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, until the mixture is hot and sizzling.
4 Stand for 2 minutes, then sprinkle with the chocolate chips and dot with peanut butter.
5 When the chocolate and peanut butter have softened, swirl them over the top of the mixture to give a marbled effect. Leave until firm, then cut into slices.

Cook's notes



If you use a see-through dish to cook the mixture, check for doneness by looking through the base of the dish. When ready the mixture should be just firm in the centre.

Nutty toffee bars

5 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

75g / 3oz digestive or plain, sweet biscuits, crushed
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, cut in small pieces
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz flaked almonds or chopped hazelnuts
75g / 3oz milk or plain chocolate chips

MAKES 15 SLICES

1 Grease a 20.5cm / 8in square dish thoroughly, sprinkle the biscuit crumbs evenly over the base and press down.
2 Put the butter and sugar into a large bowl, transfer the bowl to the cooker and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Remove from the microwave and whisk until smooth. Return the dish to the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2 minutes. Then spread the butter mixture evenly over the biscuit base.
3 Sprinkle the almonds or hazelnuts evenly over the smoothed butter and sugar mixture. Return to the cooker and microwave to boil, then let stand, cool and slice as shown in the steps below.

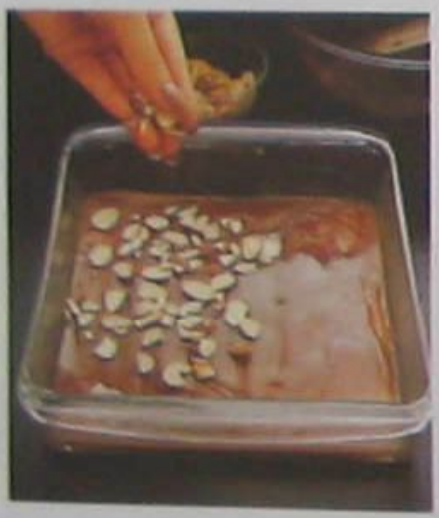
Microtips

Because all these mixtures have a very high fat and sugar content, they should be watched carefully when in the microwave. If the mixture starts to cook too quickly and begins to bubble, reduce power at once to avoid any risk of scorching the biscuits.

Cook's notes

Don't let the toffee biscuit mixture become too hard before cutting or the slices will shatter when you try to remove them from the dish. If this happens, return the dish and mixture to the cooker and microwave for 30-45 seconds at 100% (High), to soften the mixture for cutting.

How to microwave Nutty toffee bars



Sprinkle *the nuts evenly over the butter mixture in the dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes, or until the mixture boils for 1 minute.*

Stand *for 2 minutes, then sprinkle the chocolate chips evenly over the surface. When the chocolate has softened sufficiently, gently spread it over the biscuit mixture.*

Leave *the mixture in a cool place to become firm, but not too hard. Cut into quarters. Loosen the edges under the biscuits, then remove to a board and cut into thin slices or bars.*

Casseroling chicken portions

Chicken cooks to perfection in the microwave, remaining moist and tender every time. Combine it with a variety of other ingredients for quick-to-produce, tasty casseroles.

Chicken is surely the most versatile of meats. It's flavour marries happily with a huge variety of ingredients, from every kind of fruit and vegetable to all sorts of herbs and spices. The fact that it can be further enhanced and enriched by flavoursome stock, wine or cream makes it possible to produce all manner of casseroles.

Use the readily available chicken portions for making casseroles, buying them as portions. Or, joint a whole chicken yourself (see recipe and steps, page 1628). Chicken portions make catering for specific numbers very easy; they also cook quickly and evenly in the microwave.

When buying chicken portions, choose those that look plump and fresh. If possible, examine the pieces carefully to ensure they have no large bits of fat sticking to them. If you find they do have when you get them home, cut this off before cooking. Skin the chicken, too, if you want to reduce the amount of fat in your diet.

Herby Spring Chicken

Freezer notes

Frozen chicken portions are an ideal freezer stand-by, but must be completely thawed before cooking. To thaw, brush off any particles of ice, then arrange on a plate with the meatiest parts outwards. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost), allowing 7-8 minutes per 450g / 1lb, turning the plate a quarter turn three times; separate pieces if necessary. Stand, covered, for 8-10 minutes.

RAY DUNS

Herby spring chicken

38 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1.5kg / 3lb oven-ready chicken
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
12-16 tiny new potatoes (total weight 350g / 12oz)
225g / 8oz baby carrots, sliced lengthways
100g / 4oz French beans
100g / 4oz button mushrooms
1 onion, cut into wedges
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock or half stock and half dry white wine
30ml / 2tbls chopped mixed herbs
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Chicken curry with coconut

66 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this curry with boiled rice, poppadums (see Back Cover, Part 22), sliced bananas and mango chutney.

4 chicken pieces (total weight about 1.6kg / 3½lb)
5cm / 2in piece fresh root ginger, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, crushed
50g / 2oz flaked almonds
50g / 2oz sultanas
5ml / 1tsp turmeric
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
100g / 4oz creamed coconut, broken into pieces
425ml / ¾pt water
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped coriander leaves or 5ml / 1tsp ground coriander
salt and pepper
15ml / 3tsp cornflour, blended with 30ml / 2tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Skin the chicken.
2 Cook two pieces of chicken in the browning dish at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Transfer to a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Reheat the browning dish for 2 minutes at 100% (High) and cook the remaining chicken in the same way. Transfer to the casserole.
3 Mix the ginger and garlic together. Add to the casserole with all the remaining ingredients ex-

How to microwave Herby spring chicken

Place *chicken on a board. Using poultry shears or a sharp, strong knife, cut off parson's nose, wing tips and small end joints from the legs. Pull out and discard any fat from inside the carcass.*

Cut *lengthways along and through the breastbone. Press open the chicken so that it lies flat, then cut through the length of the backbone so that the chicken is now in two halves.*

Cut *through between the leg and carcass of one chicken half to make two even-sized quarters. Repeat with the other half of the chicken. Pierce the portions all over with a fork.*

Pre-heat *browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to maker's instructions. Add oil. Add chicken skin side down. Press until sizzling stops; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes.*

Remove *chicken from the dish and set aside. Place the potatoes, carrots and beans in the dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once. Add the mushrooms and onion and cook for 5 minutes more.*

Stir *in flour; gradually add stock, half the herbs and season. Arrange chicken on top; microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes or until cooked. Stand 5 minutes; sprinkle with remaining herbs.*

cept for the blended cornflour. Cover and microwave at 30% (Low) for 55-57 minutes, until the chicken is tender. Rearrange the portions three times.

4 Remove the chicken from the casserole and put on one side. Skim any fat from the surface of the sauce, then stir in the cornflour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring once. Return the chicken to the dish and serve.

Moroccan chicken stew

32 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

3 carrots, sliced
1 large onion, chopped
225g / 8oz swede, diced
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
pinch of ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp cayenne pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp caraway seeds
salt and pepper
2 courgettes, sliced
397g / 14oz can tomatoes
50ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
50g / 2oz raisins
4 chicken breasts on the bone, skinned (total weight about 1.1kg / 2½lb)

SERVES 4

1 Place carrots, onion, swede, spices and seasonings in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir twice during cooking.

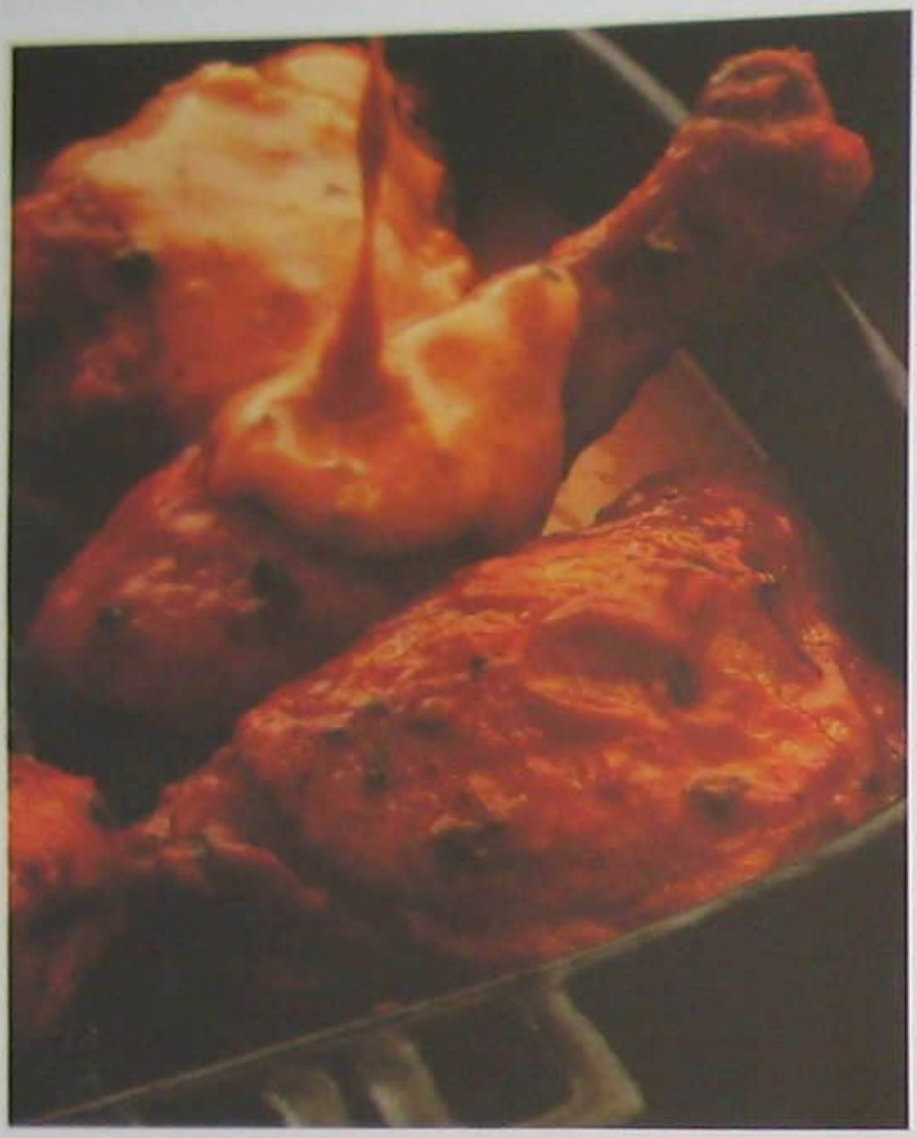
2 Add the courgette, tomatoes, tomato purée and raisins. Arrange the chicken pieces on top.

3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes or until meat near bone is no longer pink. Rearrange chicken and stir vegetables once. Stand for 5 minutes.

Moroccan Chicken Stew

Cook's notes

Fresh herbs make all the difference to Herby Spring Chicken. A selection is usually available in the fresh vegetable section of most supermarkets or from your greengrocer. Parsley and tarragon are especially good with chicken.



Creamy tomato chicken

24 mins

Standing time: none

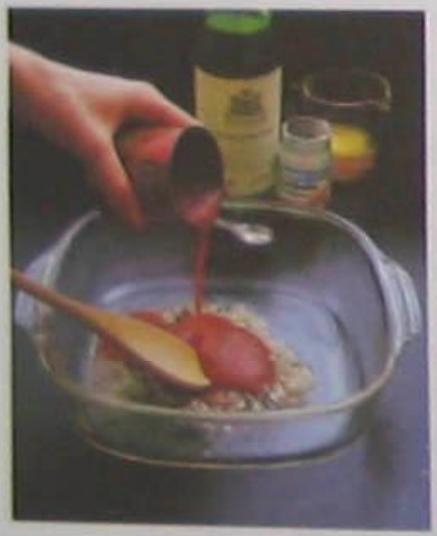
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15g / ½oz butter
400g / 14oz can sieved tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
pepper
60ml / 4tbls chicken stock or white wine
4 chicken quarters (total weight about 1.1kg / 2½lb)
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
50g / 2oz grated Parmesan cheese
50g / 2oz flaked almonds

SERVES 4

Slimmer's notes

Skin the chicken before cooking. Substitute low-fat spread for the butter and natural yoghurt for the soured cream. Use only 25g / 1oz Parmesan cheese and sprinkle with basil instead of nuts for 255Cal / 1070kJ per portion.

How to microwave Creamy tomato chicken



Place *the onion, garlic and butter in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until the onion is tender. Add tomatoes, sugar, herbs, pepper and stock and stir together well.*

Add *the chicken and spoon the sauce over it. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes, or until the chicken is done and the meat near the bone is no longer pink. Stir well twice during cooking.*

Place *the chicken on a serving dish. Skim fat off the surface of the sauce, then stir in the cream and cheese. Reheat at 100% (High) for 1 minute and spoon the sauce over the chicken. Sprinkle with almonds and serve.*

Orange and Walnut Chicken

Orange and walnut chicken

23 mins

Standing time: none

4 chicken quarters (total weight about 1.1kg / 2½lb)
275ml / ½pt orange juice
5ml / 1tsp chicken seasoning
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
3 spring onions, chopped
50g / 2oz walnut halves

SERVES 4

1 Put chicken into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, meaty parts to outside.
2 Mix orange juice and seasoning. Pour over chicken; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes, until cooked.
3 Place chicken on a serving dish.
4 Blend cornflour and water to a smooth paste. Stir into the juice. Add spring onions and walnuts.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, until thick; stir once. Pour over chicken and serve.

Stewed chicken and broth

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This is a 'two-in-one' casserole: reserve the cooked chicken to use cold — in a salad or diced in a risotto for example — serve the tasty, nourishing broth hot, with wholewheat rolls if liked.

4 chicken quarters (total weight about 1.1kg / 2½lb)
1 carrot, cut in chunks
1 celery stalk, cut in pieces
1 small onion, thinly sliced
225ml / 8fl oz hot chicken stock
1 bay leaf
3 whole peppercorns
pepper

SERVES 4

VARIATION

Chicken and vegetable casserole: add a 225g / 8oz can tomatoes and 100g / 4oz sliced button mushrooms with the other vegetables, plus 5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs. Do not reserve the chicken portions, but serve the complete casserole with rice or noodles.

Slimmer's notes

The casserole is a satisfying meal for slimmers. With 50g / 2oz rice, a portion has 225Cal / 1070kJ.

Chicken with olives

20½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
225ml / 8fl oz dry white wine
1 chicken stock cube
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper
dash of Tabasco sauce
1kg / 2¼lb chicken portions
1 onion, thinly sliced
50g / 2oz pimiento-stuffed green olives, chopped
finely chopped parsley, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place butter in a 2.5L / 4½pt casserole, cover, and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the flour and blend in the wine until smooth. Crush the stock cube and mix it in with the garlic, seasoning and Tabasco.
2 Add the chicken portions, placing meatiest portions to the outside of the casserole. Sprinkle with onion and olives.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Turn chicken and rearrange. Spoon sauce over chicken, cover and microwave for a further 10-15 minutes, or until the meat near the bone is no longer pink.
4 Cover and stand for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

How to microwave Stewed chicken and broth

Arrange *the chicken in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole dish with the meatiest parts to the outsides of the dish. Add all the remaining ingredients, seasoning generously with pepper.*

Microwave, *covered, at 100% (High) for 20 minutes or until chicken is cooked, rearranging pieces twice. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Remove chicken; serve broth.*

Super side dishes

Whether you're entertaining or preparing a meal for the family, make the most of your microwave and have tasty and colourful vegetables that are an exciting addition to any meal.

Vegetable side dishes enhance the main course of a meal, adding fresh, delicate flavours, colour and contrast to the main dish — and cooking vegetables in the microwave makes excellent sense. Taste and texture are retained and the goodness of the vegetables is maintained as cooking is quick and uses less water than most conventional methods.

When preparing vegetables for the microwave, cut them into even-sized pieces. This ensures even cooking. They should also be stirred thoroughly once or twice during cooking, moving food from the outside of the dish into the middle, so that all the vegetables have a chance to cook through. Cover the vegetables during cooking unless the recipe specifically says not to. This helps to retain moisture. Keep the vegetables cov-

French-style Fennel

RAYMONS

ered while they are standing as well to help keep them warm and succulent. Salt should be used sparingly and only added at the end of the cooking time as it tends to toughen vegetables.

French-style fennel is a delicious and unusual dish with a subtle flavour of aniseed, impressive for a dinner party. Carrots are transformed by adding a honey glaze or by combining them with asparagus. Quick cooking helps cabbage retain its lovely, crunchy texture and the addition of caraway seeds gives a distinctive flavour. Colourful Coleslaw is another tasty dish. By serving this usually cold salad hot you bring out its full flavour.

Slimmer's notes

Herby Green Beans (page 1634) have only 20Cal / 84kJ per portion, if made without oil. Use 75g / 3oz fructose to replace the sugar in Colourful Coleslaw for 80Cal / 335kJ.

French-style fennel

21 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

This rich and creamy dish, with a mild flavour of aniseed, goes well with ham or chicken. Or, you could serve it alone as a starter.

2 large heads fennel
30ml / 2tbls water
50g / 2oz butter
1 garlic clove, crushed
pepper to taste
100ml / 3fl oz double cream

SERVES 4

1 Cut the fennel bulbs in half lengthways, trim the root ends and discard. Cut away a few of the fennel fronds, chop and reserve.
2 Place the fennel halves cut side down in a shallow dish (see Microtips). Add the water, butter, garlic and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
3 Turn the fennel over and rearrange, then microwave for a further 8-10 minutes or until very tender. Pour over the cream and microwave for 3 minutes. Cover and leave to stand for 3 minutes.
4 Scatter the chopped fennel fronds over the fennel and serve immediately.

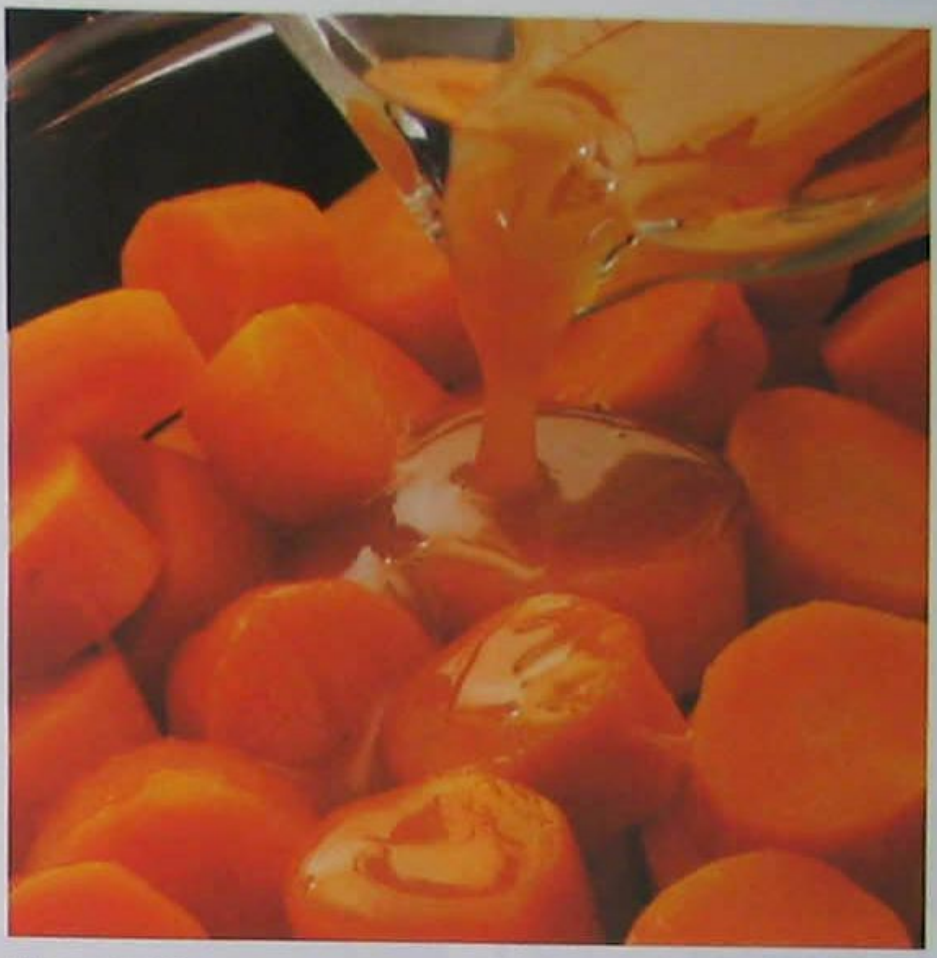
VARIATIONS

Fennel with Wine: use dry white wine in place of the cream.

For French-style courgettes: cut 450g / 1lb courgettes into thick diagonal slices. Add the water, butter, garlic and pepper. Cover and microwave for 7-9 minutes, stirring once and adding the cream 3 minutes before the end of cooking time. Scatter with snipped chives, if liked.

Microtips

Choose a rectangular dish and arrange the fennel halves in alternate directions so that they fit neatly together — this way they cook more evenly.



Honey-glazed Carrots

Honey-glazed carrots

7¾ mins

Standing time: none

6 carrots, total weight 450g / 1lb, cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
30ml / 2tbls water
30ml / 2tbls brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls honey
large knob of butter or margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp grated orange zest
2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine carrots and water in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until just tender, stirring once during cooking time. Drain.
2 In a small bowl, mix the sugar, honey, butter, orange zest and cornflour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds or until clear, thickened and bubbly. Stir once during the cooking time.
3 Pour glaze over carrots and toss to coat.

Caraway cabbage

6½ mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb white cabbage, shredded
30ml / 2tbls water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls single cream
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp caraway seeds

SERVES 4

1 Combine cabbage, water and butter in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes. Drain.
2 Season to taste and add caraway seeds. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 30 seconds until hot.

VARIATION
Add a splash of cider vinegar and use natural yoghurt for cream.

Left: *Herby Green Beans*
Below: *Caraway Cabbage*

Colourful Coleslaw

8 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb white cabbage, shredded
225g / ½lb carrots, grated
30ml / 2tbls chopped green pepper
30ml / 2tbls chopped onion
175g / 6oz sugar
175ml / 6fl oz white wine vinegar
125ml / 4fl oz water
2.5ml / ½tsp celery seeds
pepper

SERVES 6

1 Mix cabbage, carrot, green pepper and onion in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until tender; stir once.
2 Mix sugar, vinegar, water, celery seeds and pepper in a jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until boiling; stir every minute. Microwave 1 minute.
3 Cool and pour over cabbage.

Herby green beans

8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

250g / 9oz French beans
150ml / ¼pt water
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
2 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
pinch of dried rosemary

SERVES 4

1 Place beans in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Add water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until just tender, stirring once. Let stand for 3 minutes.
2 Combine green pepper, onion and oil in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
3 Drain beans. Add pepper mix with tomatoes, seasoning, sugar and herbs. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until heated through.

Crunchin' green beans

11½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb green beans, cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
60ml / 4tbls water
30ml / 2tbls light brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
25g / 1oz butter or margarine

TOPPING
45-60ml / 3-4tbls stale breadcrumbs
45-60ml / 3-4tbls slivered almonds
15ml / 1tbls butter, softened
pinch of nutmeg

SERVES 4

1 Combine beans and water in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, or until tender. Stir once. Stand for 5 minutes. Drain, reserving 50ml / 2fl oz cooking liquid.
2 In a small jug, combine sugar and cornflour. Blend in lemon juice and reserved cooking liquid. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring once. Add butter. Pour sauce over beans.
3 Combine topping ingredients and sprinkle over beans. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes.

German potato salad

14½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into 6mm / ¼in thick slices
30ml / 2tbls water
4 rashers back bacon, rinded and cut into 12mm / ½in pieces

DRESSING
275ml / ½pt milk
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
45ml / 3tbls white wine vinegar
30ml / 2tbls sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp celery seed

SERVES 4

1 Place potatoes and water in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the potatoes are just tender, stirring once. Stand, covered, for 2 minutes, then drain.
2 Place the bacon in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until crisp. Remove and drain on absorbent paper. Drain, reserving 30ml / 2tbls bacon fat.
3 Stir milk and cornflour into the reserved bacon fat and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, stirring twice. Stir in vinegar, sugar and celery seed.
4 Add the bacon and potatoes to the dressing. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and the mixture is heated, stirring once.

Left: *Crunchin' Green Beans*
Above: *German Potato Salad*

Cook's notes

Toasted or baked breadcrumbs are a useful standby for sprinkling over microwaved vegetables to add texture and a golden, toasted colour. Alternatively, sprinkle the vegetables with crushed crisps.

Asparagus Special

Asparagus special

11 mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz carrots, sliced
275ml / ½pt water
350g / 12oz can asparagus cuts and tips, drained
75g / 3oz butter
15ml / 1tbls light soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls sunflower seeds

SERVES 4

1 Place carrots and water in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until just tender. Drain and return to casserole. Gently stir in the asparagus.
2 Place butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until melted. Stir in soy sauce.
3 Pour butter mixture over vegetables and stir. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until heated through.
4 Sprinkle with sunflower seeds and serve.

Creamy courgettes

6¾ mins

Standing time: none

3-4 courgettes, weighing 450g / 1lb, cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
30ml / 2tbls water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
25g / 2tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped chervil or parsley
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
150ml / ¼pt half cream or top of milk

SERVES 4

1 Combine courgettes and water in a 2L / 3½pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until tender, stirring once. Drain and set aside.
2 Place butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted. Stir in flour, seasonings and sugar. Blend in cream.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, or until thickened, stirring twice.
4 Pour sauce over courgettes.
5 Serve with grilled chops.

Cook's notes

You may substitute yellow courgettes to make this an especially colourful dish. They are very similar to green courgettes although not so readily available.

Adapting a recipe: sweets

Microwaved sweets are so easy, the kids can join in the making as well as the eating. Mouthwatering toffee and fudge or deliciously rich truffles will all get a thumbs up!

For cleaner, quicker results the microwave is certainly the way to make home-made sweets. No more hovering over hot pans to stir the syrup in a steamy kitchen. No more hard work washing up! Just microwave the syrup in a large bowl, stirring two or three times during cooking; the even temperature of the microwaves takes away the danger of scorching.

Always use a very large bowl to prevent the syrup or mixture boiling over; the bowl must be heatproof as the sugar reaches very high temperatures. You will need thick oven gloves when handling the bowl to protect your hands, as the heat from the mixture will be transferred to the container.

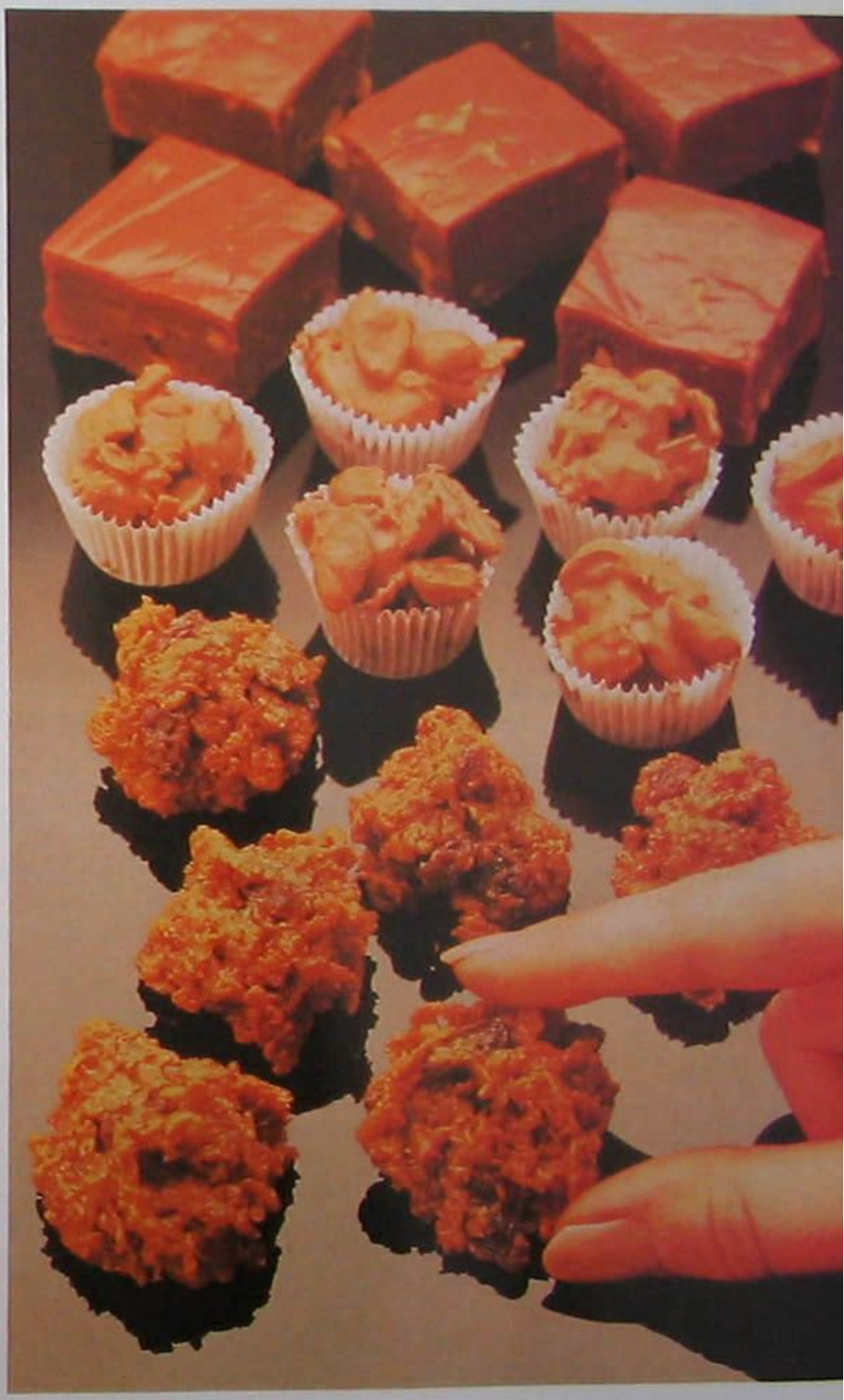
For sweet-making, a sugar thermometer is useful, although the cold water tests for the stages of the syrup are a good alternative. Do remember that the temperature of the syrup will continue to rise slightly when removed from the cooker, and also that the thermometer should never be left in a mixture during microwaving as it will damage the machine.

A small toffee hammer is handy for breaking up slabs of toffee. Or use the end of a rolling pin.

Storing sweets

Store these sweets in airtight containers, layered with sheets of greaseproof paper. Toffees are best wrapped in stretch wrap to keep them from going soft.

Store in a cool, dry place — the crisper compartment of the refrigerator will do if the kitchen is too warm. Most will store successfully for up to a week, although softer fudge and truffles are best eaten within 2-3 days. Eat Divinity, see page 1640 on the day it is made.



From top: *Easy Fudge, Chocolate Crunch Cups and Sultana Chews.*

Chocolate crunch cups

3 mins

Standing time: none

2 × 100g / 4oz slabs hard toffee
60ml / 4tbls milk
115g / 4.06oz packet milk chocolate chips
225g / 8oz salted peanuts
25g / 1oz packet salted crisps, crushed

MAKES ABOUT 32

1 Combine the toffee and milk in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until melted. Stir halfway through cooking and at the end to blend well.
2 Add the chocolate chips and beat in until melted.
3 Stir in the peanuts and crisps. Drop spoonfuls onto greaseproof paper or into small paper cases. Chill until set.

Sultana chews

1 min

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz butter
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
225g / 8oz sultana bran flakes

MAKES ABOUT 32

1 Put the butter and sugar into a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until the butter is melted and the sugar dissolved. Stir well.
2 Stir in the bran flakes until well blended. Drop spoonfuls of the mixture onto greaseproof paper, or into small paper cases. Chill.

Liqueur truffles

1½ mins

Standing time: none

2½ × 250g / 8oz bars plain dessert chocolate
125ml / 4fl oz double cream
30ml / 2tbls cherry brandy

MAKES 20

1 Coarsely grate two of the chocolate bars and place in a large bowl. Grate the remaining half a bar finely and spread on greaseproof paper.
2 Microwave the cream in a small bowl at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, then pour over the coarsely grated chocolate. Stir to blend, then stir in the brandy and cool.
3 Take small spoonfuls of the mixture and shape into balls. Roll in the finely grated chocolate to coat and put into small sweet cases. Store in the refrigerator.

Easy fudge

6 mins

Standing time: none

397g / 14oz can condensed milk
50g / 2oz butter
175g / 6oz salted peanuts
225g / 8oz plain chocolate

MAKES ABOUT 32 CUBES

1 Lightly grease a 20cm / 8in square dish.
2 Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the chocolate melts. Stir every 2 minutes, and when cooked.
3 Pour into the prepared dish. Cool slightly, then chill until set.

Microtips

If using a sugar thermometer, always test at the end of the minimum recommended microwaving time, and remember that the temperature of the syrup or mixture will continue to rise for several seconds after it is removed from the microwave. Never leave the thermometer in the syrup or mixture during microwaving as it will cause damage to the cooker.

Cook's notes

Because of their high sugar content, sweet mixtures should not be left unattended at any stage during microwaving. Watch them closely to avoid any danger of overheating and burning.

Choc-topped Toffee

Choc-topped toffee

4½ mins

Standing time: none

Always popular with the kids, this delicious combination of toffee, nuts and chocolate will be a hit with all the family.

200g / 7.05oz packet chopped walnuts
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
100g / 4oz butter, cubed
115g / 4.06oz packet plain chocolate chips

MAKES 600g / 1¼lb

1 Lightly grease a 20cm / 8in square dish, then sprinkle the chopped nuts over the bottom.
2 Combine the sugar and butter in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-6 minutes, or until the sugar has dissolved, stirring every 2 minutes.
3 Pour the mixture over the nuts and spread evenly.
4 Sprinkle the chocolate chips over the toffee and leave until they have melted. Spread evenly over the top with a palette knife.
5 Leave in a cool place or the refrigerator until set. To serve, turn out of the dish and break into pieces.

Guidelines for microwaving toffee

Microwave *toffee in a bowl larger than the saucepan used conventionally, to stop boiling over.*

Stir *toffee mixture every 2 minutes when microwaving rather than constantly as in conventional cooking.*

Microwave *until the sugar has dissolved and the toffee mixture is smooth and golden brown.*

Choc-topped toffee

CONVENTIONAL RECIPE

200g/7.05oz packet chopped walnuts
175g/6oz soft brown sugar
100g/4oz butter
115g/4.06oz packet plain chocolate chips

MAKES 600g/1¼lb

1 Lightly grease a 20cm/8in square dish. Sprinkle the chopped nuts in the bottom of the dish.

2 Put the sugar and butter in a 1.1L/2pt saucepan and bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the sugar has completely dissolved. Boil for 7 minutes, stirring.

3 Pour the mixture over the nuts and spread evenly. Sprinkle the chocolate chips over the top and leave until melted. Spread evenly over the toffee with a palette knife. Cool until set.

Cubed

2.3L/4pt bowl

Stirring every 2 minutes

Microwave at 100% (High)

Left: *Nutty Fudge*
Right: *Divinity*

Nutty fudge

12 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb sugar
225ml / 8fl oz milk
50g / 2oz plain chocolate
15ml / 1tbls cocoa powder
15ml / 1tbls golden syrup
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
225g / 8oz mixed nuts, roughly chopped

MAKES 32 PIECES

1 Lightly grease a 23 × 12.5cm / 9 × 5in dish.
2 Combine the sugar, milk, chocolate, cocoa, syrup and salt in a 2.8L / 5pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until the sugar dissolves. Stir thoroughly.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, stirring three times or until the mixture registers 115° / 240F on a sugar thermometer — the soft ball stage. To test without a thermometer, drop a small spoonful of the mixture into a cup of very cold water — it should form a soft ball, which will flatten when removed from the water.
4 Stir the butter into the mixture. Leave to cool, without stirring, for about 10 minutes, or until the temperature drops to 43°C / 110°F Add the vanilla flavouring and beat with a wooden spoon until the fudge is thick and starts to lose its shine. Stir in the nuts.
5 Spread the fudge quickly in the greased dish. Cut into squares while still warm. Leave until cold and set before removing.

Cook's notes

A sugar thermometer is essential when making Divinity. If the temperature is too low the Divinity will be soft; too high and the sweets will be brittle. Test the syrup at the end of the minimum microwaving time, then every minute. Remember the temperature will rise for several seconds after the mixture has been removed from the microwave.

An electric mixer is also necessary as speed is essential for successful results.

Divinity

14 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb caster sugar
100g / 4oz golden syrup
125ml / 4fl oz water
pinch of salt
2 egg whites
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES ABOUT 16-20

1 Combine the sugar, syrup, water and salt in a deep, 3.4L / 6pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; stir well.
2 Continue to microwave for 9-12 minutes, until the syrup registers 130°C / 260°F on a sugar thermometer — hard ball stage. (The syrup forms a hard ball when shaped in cold water.)
3 Immediately, whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks form, using an electric mixer. Slowly pour in the syrup, beating constantly.
4 Add the vanilla flavouring and continue beating for 4-5 minutes, or until the mixture holds its shape and starts to lose its gloss.
5 Quickly drop heaped teaspoonfuls of the mixture onto greaseproof paper. Leave to set.

Honeycomb candy

9 mins

Standing time: none

Wear oven gloves when removing this candy from the microwave to check the temperature, as the high temperature of the mixture will transfer to the cooking bowl, making it too hot to handle.

225g / 8oz sugar
350g / 12oz golden syrup
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls bicarbonate of soda

MAKES 600g / 1½lb

How to microwave Honeycomb candy

Combine *sugar, syrup and vinegar in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl or jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Remove cover and stir well.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 5-10 minutes, until syrup registers 150°C / 300°F (hard crack stage). Or, drop some into cold water.*

Remove *threads from water. If they bend, microwave 1-2 minutes more. The syrup is ready when threads are very brittle.*

Quickly *stir in the bicarbonate of soda, mixing well. The mixture will foam up as the soda is stirred in.*

Grease *a 20cm / 8in square dish and line with foil. Pour in the mixture and allow it to flow to the edges of the dish.*

Leave *until set, then turn out and peel off foil. Break into small pieces. Store in an airtight container.*

Versatile veal

Pie veal is all too often neglected — yet it is both economical enough for every day and unusual enough for a special occasion. With a little microwave magic, making more of this tasty meat is as easy as pie.

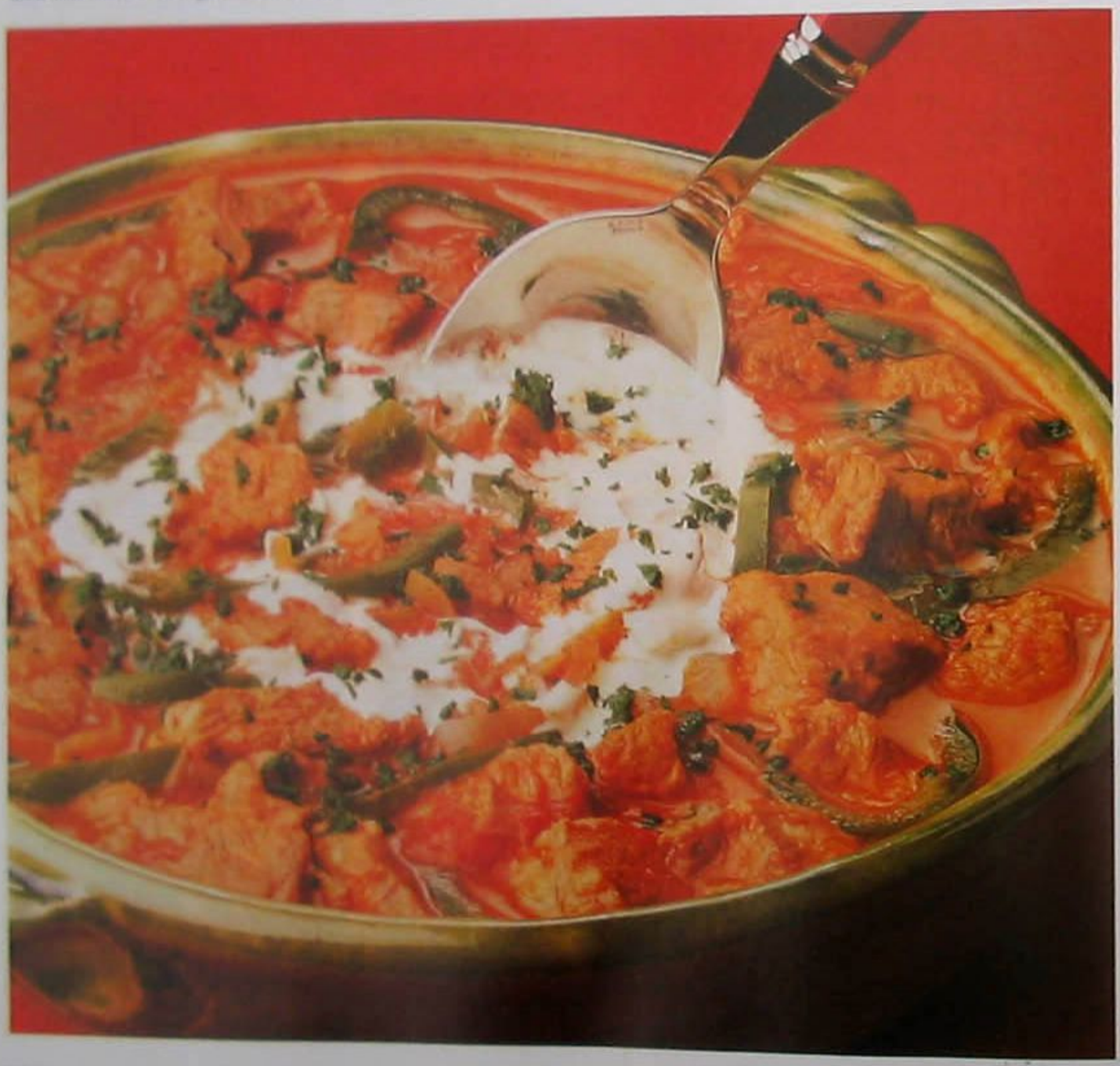
Veal is usually thought of as a luxury for rare and special occasions only. Pie veal, however, is widely available in supermarkets and is very economically priced.

It is usually sold in small cubes, trimmed of fat, so preparation is minimal — simply trim off any odd bits of fat and gristle and the fine membranes. The meat should look fresh and not brown or dry. Its flavour combines well with other ingredients and, cooked in the microwave, it remains moist and tender.

The beauty of pie veal lies in its versatility. Perfect for traditional dishes, such as a goulash or a blanquette, it can also be minced for delicious meatballs, forcemeat stuffing or a tasty pâté.

If you have difficulty obtaining pie veal, you could use meat trimmed from the leg. Cut it away from the bones, trim off any fat, gristle or stringy bits and cut the meat into even-sized cubes.

Veal Goulash



PAUL GRATER

Veal goulash

55 mins

Standing time: none

1 large onion, sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
450g / 1lb pie veal, trimmed
15ml / 1tbls paprika
salt and pepper
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
1 bay leaf
150ml / ¼pt red wine

TO SERVE
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion, green pepper, garlic and oil into a 3.1L / 5½pt casserole dish. Mix well, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until softened.
2 Add the veal to the casserole and mix well. Stir in paprika and pepper to taste together with the tomatoes, bay leaf and wine.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes, or until the sauce boils. Reduce to 50% (Medium) and cook for 35-40 minutes more, or until the veal is cooked and tender. Stir once during cooking. Season to taste.
4 To serve, swirl the soured cream through the goulash and sprinkle with parsley. Serve with noodles or boiled rice.

Tarragon veal meatballs

22 mins

Standing time: 4-5 mins

450g / 1lb veal, minced
30ml / 2tbls dried tarragon
60ml / 4tbls brown breadcrumbs
dash of Worcestershire sauce
1 egg
salt and pepper

SAUCE
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely sliced
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour

PAUL GRATER

Tarragon Veal Meatballs

1 bay leaf
275ml / ½pt medium-sweet cider
1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and sliced

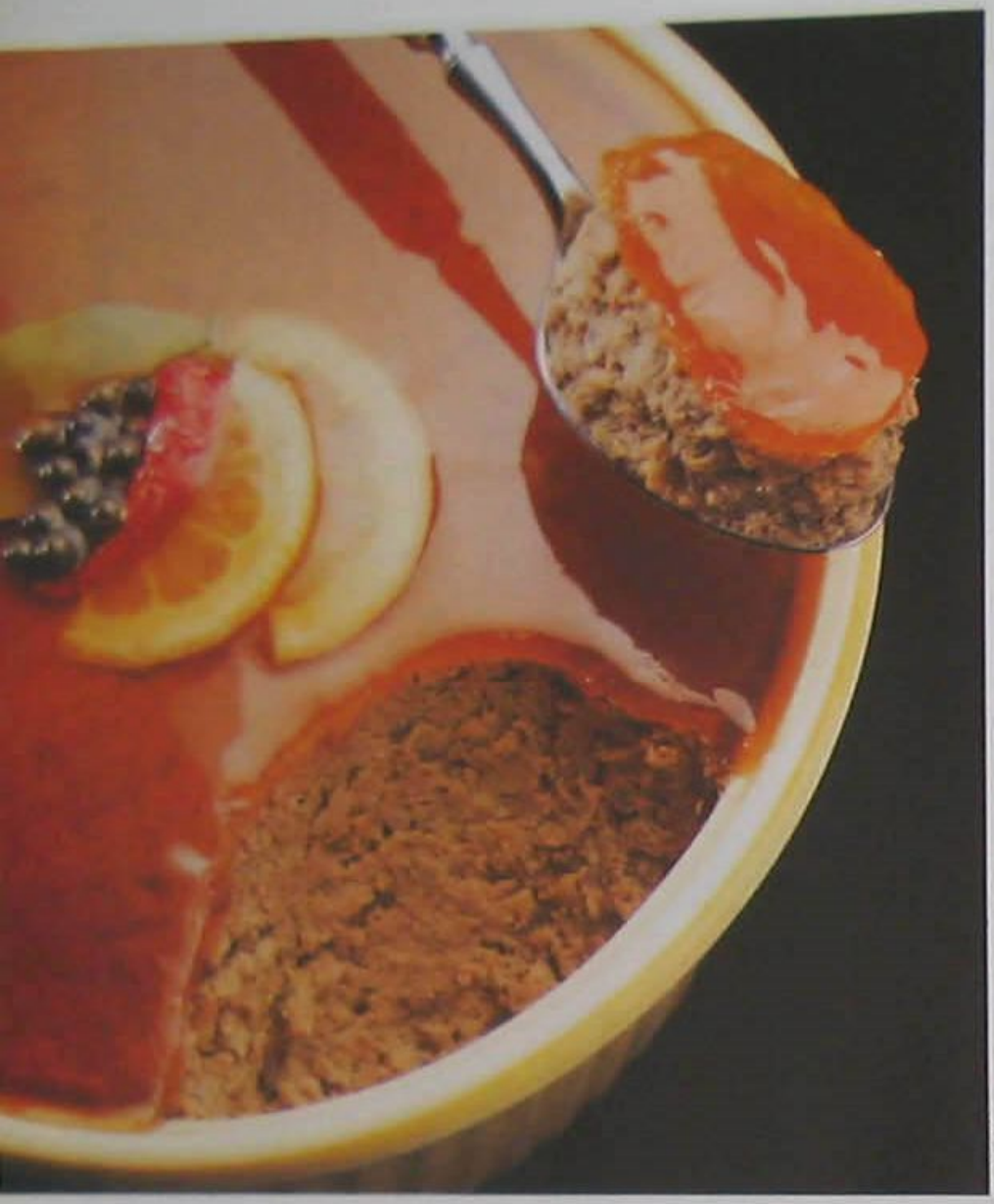
SERVES 4

1 Mix veal with tarragon, breadcrumbs, Worcestershire sauce and egg. Season generously and mix well with a wooden spoon. Divide into 12 equal portions and, with damp hands, roll each into a ball.
2 Place six meatballs in a ring around the edge of a plate. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until the meatballs are cooked on the outside, but slightly pink inside. Turn and rearrange once during cooking. Transfer to a serving dish, cover, and stand for 4-5 minutes. Microwave the remaining six meatballs.
3 For the sauce, put the onion, celery and butter into a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until the vegetables have softened.
4 Stir flour into vegetables and add bay leaf and cider. Tip in the cooking juices. Season to taste and add the apple slices. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until thickened.
5 Pour sauce over the meatballs. Reheat at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until heated through. Serve with mashed potatoes and green beans.

Tarragon veal meatballs for two: halve the ingredients for the meatball mixture; make six meatballs and cook as for the first batch. For the sauce, halve the ingredients and microwave for 3-3½ minutes at Stage 3, and for 4-5 minutes at Stage 4. Reheat the finished dish for 1 minute.

Cook's notes

If possible, use a food processor to mince pie veal — it gives a super-smooth result. If you do not have a processor, put the meat through the coarse disc of a mincer.



DAVE KING

Veal pâté de luxe

23½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

450g / 1lb veal, minced
450g / 1lb lambs' liver, cubed
100g / 4oz streaky bacon, diced
1 large onion, chopped
4 garlic cloves, chopped
1 bay leaf
5ml / 1tsp dried thyme
5ml / 1tsp ground mace
50g / 2oz butter
150ml / ¼pt red wine
60ml / 4tbls brandy
60ml / 4tbls very fine dry white breadcrumbs

GARNISH

5ml / 1tsp aspic powder
150ml / ¼pt plus 30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 1tbls bottled green peppercorns, drained
2 small bay leaves
2 lemon slices, halved
1 red chilli pepper, cut in half lengthways and seeds removed

SERVES 6-8

1 Put veal, liver, bacon, onion, garlic, bay leaf, thyme and mace in to a 3.1L / 5½pt casserole. Mix well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, or until the liver is cooked, but still pink in the middle. Discard bay leaf.

2 Mince or process the meat mixture, in two or three batches, until as smooth as possible.

3 Put butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds to soften. Add to the pâté mixture with wine, brandy and breadcrumbs. Season well and stir throughly.

4 Turn the mixture into a 15-18cm / 7-8in soufflé dish and smooth the top. Cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until set.

5 Stand for 10 minutes, then check: the middle should be firm without feeling solid. Allow to go cold, cover with greaseproof paper and a plate. Weigh down and chill in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours, or overnight. Decorate, see steps, and serve with hot toast.

How to decorate Veal pâté de luxe

Mix *aspic powder with 30ml / 2tbls cold water in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, or until powder has dissolved and liquid is hot, but not bubbling hard. Stir. Add a scant 150ml / ¼pt cold water.*

Uncover *pâté and spoon a little aspic over the top. Freeze for a few minutes until half set. Arrange peppercorns, bay leaves, lemon slices and red chilli in the setting aspic. Spoon over remaining aspic and chill until set.*

Turkey and veal paupiettes

19 mins

Standing time: none

2 large turkey breast fillets (each weighing about 225g / 8oz)

FORCEMEAT
225g / 8oz veal, minced
100g / 4oz lean bacon, minced
1 onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz fresh breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp dried thyme
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
lemon slices and parsley sprigs

SAUCE
50g / 2oz butter
coarsley grated zest of 1 lemon
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt boiling chicken stock
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
60ml / 4tbls double cream

SERVES 4

1 Slice through turkey fillets horizontally to make four. Flatten to 6mm / ¼in thickness between sheets of greaseproof paper.
2 Mix together veal, bacon, onion, breadcrumbs, thyme and parsley. Season. Spread a quarter of the forcemeat over each turkey slice. Roll up and arrange round the edge of a plate. Dot with butter.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-14 minutes, or until turkey is cooked, turning rolls over halfway through. Transfer to a serving dish and keep warm.
4 Stir lemon zest and flour into cooking juices. Stir in stock and parsley. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, or until thickened, stirring once. Whisk in cream, microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.

Cook's notes

Always check a dish at the end of the minimum recommended microwave cooking time by piercing the meat with a long-bladed knife. It is done when no longer pink in the centre.

Blanquette de veau

66 mins

Standing time: none

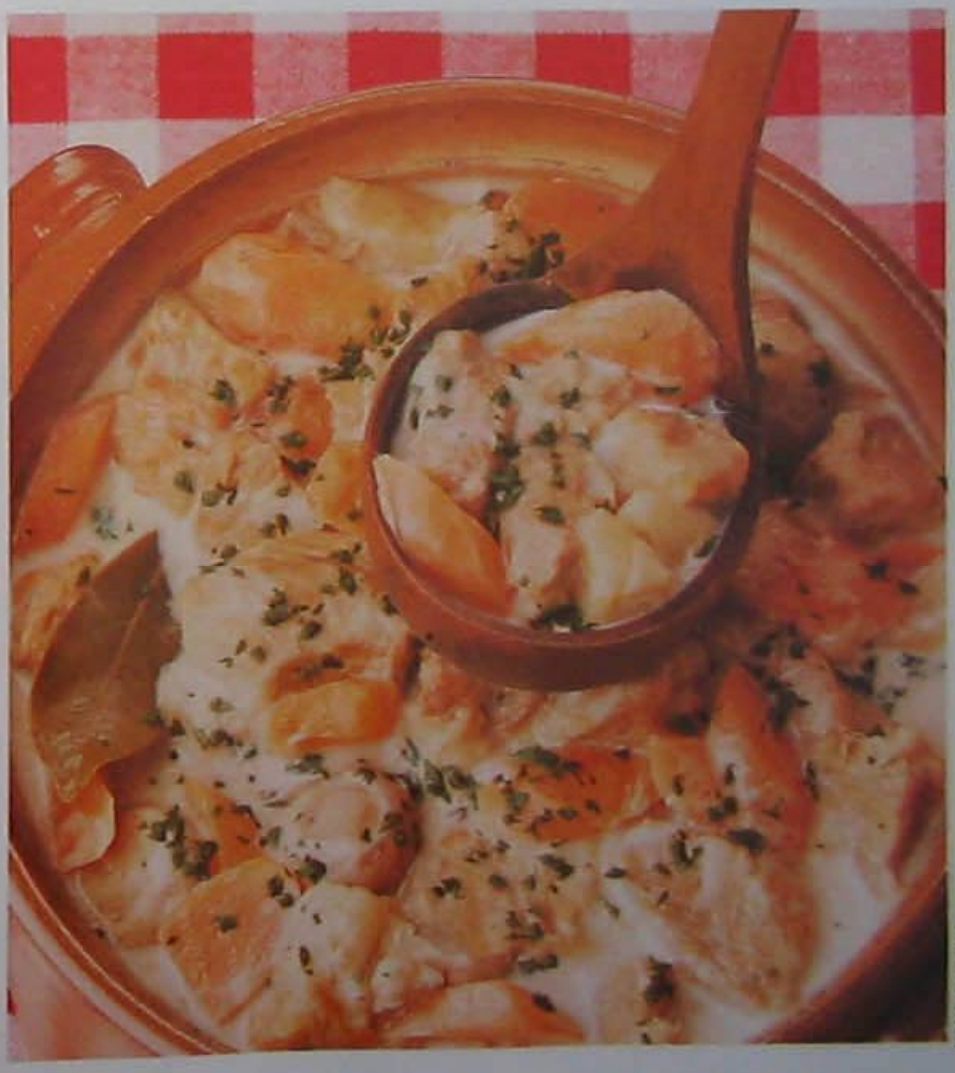
A blanquette is a white stew and, strictly, it should contain only 'white' ingredients. The carrots in this recipe add colour, but you could replace them with the white part of 1-2 leeks, chopped. If you cannot get fresh herbs, use a bought bouquet garni.

225g / 8oz shallots, peeled
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
675g / 1½lb pie veal
275ml / ½pt dry white wine
150ml / ¼pt water
3-4 carrots, thickly sliced
1 bay leaf
3-4 sprigs parsley
2 sprigs thyme
2 sprigs sage or rosemary
100g / 4oz tiny button mushrooms
150ml / ¼pt single cream
chopped parsley to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion and oil into a 3.1L / 5pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in the flour, salt and pepper, and veal. Mix well, then add the wine, water and carrots.
3 Tie bay leaf, parsley, thyme and sage or rosemary. Add to casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes, until boiling, stirring once during cooking.
4 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 40-43 minutes, or until tender. Stir once.
5 Add mushrooms and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes. Stir in cream; microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until hot.
6 Season to taste. Remove bouquet garni. Sprinkle with parsley.

Blanquette de veau



INTERNATIONAL MENU

Greek supper for 6

Greek traditional fare is aromatic and delicious — a marvellous way to entertain. Let your microwave help you produce this convivial meal, leaving you free to be with your guests.

Serve Aubergine Dip accompanied by strips of pitta bread as they do in Greece — as an appetizer with pre-dinner drinks. Really capture the Greek tradition here, by giving your guests tall glasses of icy ouzo (see page 1649). The aniseed flavour is delicious with the smoky taste of aubergine.

Begin the meal itself with what has almost become the Greek national dish — Dolmas (or Dolmades). These small parcels of meat, rice and other tasty ingredients wrapped in vine leaves are easy to make and quick to cook in the microwave. The main course, Pastitsio, is a delicious concoction of pasta, lamb and tomatoes with a melt-in-the-mouth cheesy topping; it makes a tasty change from the better-known Moussaka. A filling and satisfying dish, it needs only the tangy Greek Salad and a bottle of Retsina — red or white as you like — to accompany it.

Baklava is a wonderfully syrupy, flaky pastry dessert, a traditional favourite and the crowning glory to this meal. Serve slices of it with small cups of strong, black coffee.

DAVE KING

Clockwise: *Dolmas (tasty stuffed vine leaves), tangy Greek Salad and a rich, smooth Aubergine Dip*

Aubergine dip

4 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

Tahini paste is made from sesame seeds and is available from many supermarkets, delicatessens and health food shops. It is a basic ingredient in Hummous — another popular Greek dip.

2 aubergines (each weighing 225g / 8oz)
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
45ml / 3tbls tahini paste
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
30ml / 2tbls natural yoghurt
5ml / 1tsp sugar
juice of 1 lemon
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Pull off the stalks of the aubergines, then brush with a little oil. Prick all over with a fork and place on absorbent paper in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, turning over once. Leave to stand for 4 minutes.

2 When aubergines are cool enough to handle, cut in half lengthways. Scoop out the flesh, discarding the seeds. Discard all the seeds as these can make the dip taste bitter.) Purée the flesh with the remaining oil, tahini, garlic, yoghurt, lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste.

3 Turn into a serving dish. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve with pitta bread.

Greek Menu

AUBERGINE DIP
A rich, smooth dip served with pitta bread

DOLMAS
Savoury morsels wrapped in vine leaves

PASTITSIO
Pasta and lamb bake with a cheesy topping

GREEK SALAD
A tangy combination of traditional ingredients

BAKLAVA
Crisp pastry with honeyed fruit and nuts

SERVES 6

Countdown

The day before
Microwave Baklava. Leave overnight to absorb the Lemon Syrup.

Early in the day
Microwave the Aubergine Dip. Pile into a serving dish, cover loosely with stretch wrap and refrigerate. Prepare the Dolmas to the end of stage 2 and refrigerate. Wash the lettuce and keep in the crisper of the refrigerator in a polythene bag. Prepare Pastitsio to the end of stage 5; cover the sauce with stretch wrap to prevent a skin forming.

Two hours before the meal
Remove Aubergine Dip from refrigerator and set aside.

30 minutes before the meal
Pour the sauce over the Pastitsio and sprinkle with cheese. Microwave, then cover with foil. Mix the salad in a serving bowl.

Just before the meal
Garnish the Aubergine Dip. Cut the pitta bread into fingers. Serve the dip with the bread. Microwave the Dolmas, covered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes or until hot (they need slightly longer than in the recipe as they have been in the refrigerator). Garnish with lemon wedges.

During the first course
Reheat Pastitsio at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Serve with salad.

Pastitsio and Greek Salad

Dolmas

5 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz packet vine leaves

FILLING

2 onions, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
100g / 4oz leftover cooked rice
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
30ml / 2tbls chopped dill
25g / 1oz pine kernels
25g / 1oz currants
175g / 6oz cooked lamb, minced
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 6

1 Cover the vine leaves with boiling water; leave for 10 minutes. Drain; dry on absorbent paper.
2 Combine all the ingredients for the filling and divide between the leaves. Fold sides of leaves over the filling, then loosely roll up from stem end. Arrange the rolls, seam side down, in a 23cm / 9in shallow, square dish.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until heated through. Serve hot or warm, with lemon wedges.

Pastitsio

40 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

350g / 12oz elbow macaroni
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
450g / 1lb boneless raw lamb, minced
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
salt and pepper

TOPPING

25g / 1oz butter
25g / 1oz plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
2 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan

SERVES 6

1 Cook the macaroni conventionally and drain well.
2 Meanwhile, microwave the oil, onion and garlic in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Cover and microwave for a further 4-5 minutes. Mix in the lamb; microwave, covered, for 4-5 minutes more, stirring frequently.
3 Add tomatoes, purée and marjoram. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, removing cover after 2 minutes. Season to taste.
4 Put butter, flour and milk into a jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thickened, whisking twice. Season. Cool slightly; whisk in eggs.
5 Put half the macaroni into an oiled 2L / 3½pt dish and add half the lamb mixture. Top with the remaining macaroni and lamb.
6 Pour over the sauce. Sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 20-25 minutes, until bubbling.

Greek salad

1 Cos lettuce, shredded
225g / 8oz feta cheese, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
75g / 3oz small black olives
½ cucumber, sliced
fresh oregano sprigs
olive oil and wine vinegar, to serve

SERVES 6

1 Put the lettuce in a serving bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and toss lightly. Serve the oil and vinegar separately.

Baklava

12 mins

Standing time: none

Once the packet of pastry is opened, keep it covered with a damp cloth to prevent drying out.

18 sheets filo or strudel pastry
225g / 8oz unsalted butter
Lemon Syrup (see below)

FILLING
350g / 12oz mixed nuts, chopped
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
100g / 4oz honey
90ml / 6tbls water
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
10ml / 2tsp grated lemon zest

MAKES 6-8 SLICES

1 Put the ingredients for filling into a 850ml / 1½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Cool slightly.
2 Put the butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave for 2-3 minutes at 100% (High) until melted.
3 Line the base of a buttered 24cm / 9½in square, shallow dish with a sheet of pastry, trimmed to fit. Brush well with melted butter. Add eight more sheets, trimming and brushing each with butter.
4 Spread the filling evenly over pastry. Add remaining pastry, a sheet at a time, trimming and brushing each with butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes until top is dry and flaky.
5 Pour the Lemon Syrup over the Baklava. Lightly brown surface under a hot grill. Leave overnight to absorb syrup. Slice to serve.

Lemon syrup

5 mins

Standing time: none

275g / 10oz sugar
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
60ml / 4tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls water

MAKES 1 QUANTITY

1 Mix ingredients in a bowl. Cook at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until sugar dissolves; stir once.

What to drink

OUZO — the favourite aperitif of Greece. Its strong aniseed flavour has herbs and sugar added in the distillation. Serve small measures with ice, topped up with cold water. The clear liquid will turn cloudy. **RETSINA** — the best known wine of Greece. Red or white, it is widely available and there are many local variations. All, however, have a small amount of resin added during fermentation which gives the wine its characteristic 'woody' taste. **METAXA** — the brandy of Greece — is available at many supermarkets; those with the highest number of stars will be the smoothest to drink.

DAVE KING

Hot 'n' spicy 2

Make fast food fantastic — a new range of taste sensations is yours when you add spices to your food. Add exciting flavours and variety to your meals, and do it quickly and conveniently in your microwave.

Spices of all sorts add variety and interest to your cooking and make the most everyday dishes tempting treats. Just as garlic has become widely accepted and available, when once it was considered exotic and 'foreign', so root ginger, fresh coriander, fresh chillies, sauces, and other dried spices and herbs can be found in many supermarkets, as well as specialist shops, as Indian and Mexican foods gain popularity.

If you're not accustomed to them, use hot spices sparingly at first until you find the level of 'heat' that suits your taste. See Part 48, page 1320, for a list of many spices and their uses.

The recipes here are a pot pourri — from soups to nuts — to show the vast range of uses you can find for spices in your cooking. Spices liven up a chowder — a substantial soup that can be a light meal in itself — and add new interest to sausage and beans or a quick meat and potato pie. Peppery Pork Pot is a casserole with a zesty, creamy sauce and Drumsticks Diablo have a wonderful sweet and sour tang.

Savoury snacks are transformed into totally irresistible treats by the addition of a few well-chosen spices. Be adventurous. Experiment with the recipes given here, then try your own combinations and you won't have a long wait for the compliments.

Spicy Snack, Chilli Nuts and Sizzling Sticks

Spicy snack

8 mins

Standing time: none

This mixture is a tantalizing blend of sweet, spicy and salty flavours.

50g / 2oz butter
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder, or to taste
10ml / 2tsp ground coriander
2.5ml / ½tsp turmeric
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz unsalted cashew nuts
50g / 2oz unsalted peanuts
15g / 1tbls sesame seeds
15g / 1tbls pumpkin seeds
50g / 2oz crispy rice cereal
50g / 2oz sultanas

MAKES ABOUT 225g / 8oz

1 Place butter, spices and seasonings in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until butter melts.
2 Stir in nuts, seeds, and cereal, mixing well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until hot, stirring every minute.
3 Add sultanas and mix well. Serve hot or cold.

Chilli nuts

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
10ml / 2tsp chilli powder, or to taste
5ml / 1tsp cayenne powder
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic powder
450g / 1lb mixed unsalted nuts (Brazil nuts, cashew nuts, peanuts, pine kernels, walnuts)

MAKES 450g / 1lb

1 Place oil, chilli powder, cayenne pepper and garlic powder in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until mixture sizzles.
2 Add nuts; stir to coat.
3 Spread nuts out on a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, stirring every minute.
4 Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Serve hot or cold.

Sizzling sticks

5½ mins

Standing time: none

15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
5ml / 1tsp paprika
5ml / 1tsp cayenne pepper
5ml / 1tsp ground black pepper
75g / 2.6oz packet potato sticks

MAKES 75g / 2.6oz

1 Place the butter, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, cayenne pepper and black pepper in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until butter is melted.
2 Stir potato sticks into the butter and mix well to coat.
3 Spread sticks on a large plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until crisp, stirring twice during cooking.
4 Serve sticks while they are still sizzling, or serve cold.

Microtips

Spices and flavourings are stronger in the microwave because less liquid is used than in conventional cooking. So, reduce the amount you would normally use until you find amounts that suit your taste.

Quick Clam Chowder

Quick clam chowder

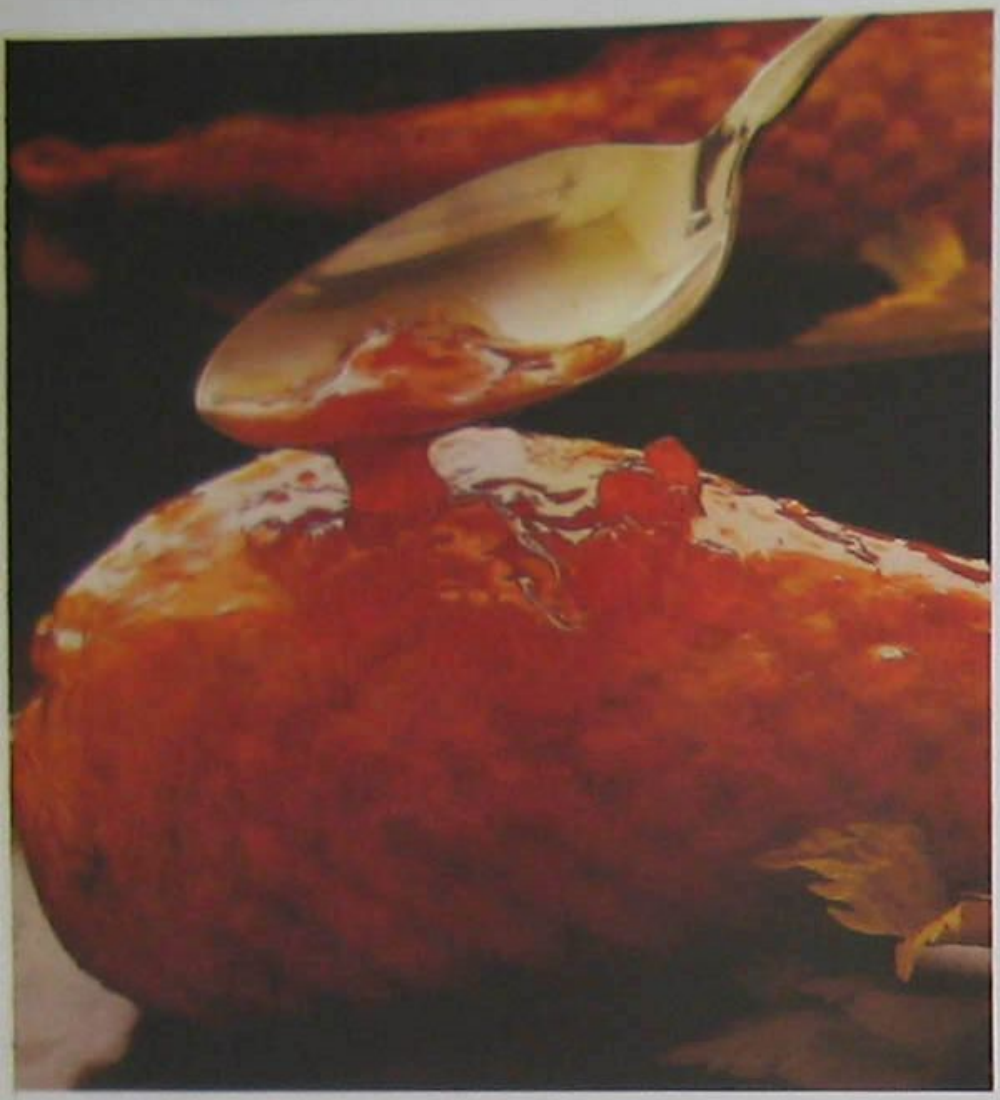
16 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
1 large potato, peeled and diced into 6mm / ¼in cubes
1 carrot, peeled and grated
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
2 × 397g / 14oz cans tomatoes
290g / 10oz can baby clams, drained
30g / 2tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
5ml / 1tsp dried thyme
5ml / 1tsp cayenne pepper
dash of Tabasco sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Place butter, potato, carrot and parsley in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.
2 Add tomatoes, clams, ketchup, thyme, cayenne, Tabasco sauce and seasoning. Stir well to break up the tomatoes.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until heated through. Stir halfway through cooking.
4 Serve hot with water biscuits or crusty granary rolls.



Drumsticks Diablo

Drumsticks diablo

19 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

100g / 4oz apricot jam
30g / 2tbls soft brown sugar
15g / 1tbls made mustard
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
2.5ml / ½tsp root ginger, peeled and grated
4 turkey drumsticks (total weight about 700g / 1½lb)
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls cold water

SERVES 4

1 Place jam, sugar, mustard, coriander and ginger in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until hot and bubbling.
2 Place turkey drumsticks in a large casserole, with the meatiest portions to the outside of the dish. Spoon half the glaze over the drumsticks. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Turn drumsticks over and coat with the remaining glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 10-12 minutes, or until the meat near the bone is no longer pink. Turn over and rearrange drumsticks twice during cooking.
4 Place drumsticks on a serving dish, cover and leave to stand for 3 minutes.
5 Blend cornflour and water together and stir into the glaze left in the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring once during cooking, until thick and clear. Spoon over drumsticks.
6 Serve with baked jacket potatoes and a mixed salad.

VARIATION
Use chicken drumsticks weighing 700g / 1½lb if turkey drumsticks are difficult to obtain.

Hot potato pie

14 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz sausagemeat
225g / 8oz minced beef
1 onion, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
300g / 10.6oz can tomato soup
15g / 1tbls soft brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp red wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
10ml / 2tsp chilli powder
dash of Tabasco sauce
salt and pepper
131g / 4½oz packet instant mashed potato
15g / ½oz butter
10ml / 2tsp paprika

SERVES 4

1 Combine sausagemeat, mince, onion and green pepper in a 1.2L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until meat is no longer pink, stirring twice. Drain.
2 Mix in tomato soup, sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, chilli, Tabasco and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until bubbling.
3 Make up potatoes as directed on packet. Add butter and paprika.
4 Spoon potato over the meat in the casserole and smooth with a fork. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the potato topping is heated through.
5 Sprinkle with a little extra paprika and serve.

Blazin' bangers and beans

17 mins

Standing time: none

4 rashers back bacon, rinded and chopped
450g / 1lb chopped beef
1 onion, chopped
1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and diced
450g / 1lb can baked beans and pork sausages in tomato sauce
30g / 2tbls black treacle
150ml / ¼pt barbecue sauce
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce

Hot Potato Pie

salt and pepper
100g / 4oz tortilla chips, broken

SERVES 4-6

1 Place bacon between two sheets of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until almost crisp.
2 Place bacon, mince, onion and apple in a 1.2L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, stirring three times during cooking. Drain.
3 Slice sausages and add to mince with beans, treacle and barbecue and Worcestershire sauces.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until hot and bubbly, stirring twice.
5 Season to taste and top with tortilla chips. Serve with a lettuce and tomato salad and granary rolls or French bread.

Peppery pork pot

12 mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

450g / 1lb pork fillet, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 onion, sliced in rings
175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
3 celery stalks, sliced
5ml / 1tsp paprika
5ml / 1tsp cayenne pepper
dash Tabasco sauce
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt soured cream or natural yoghurt

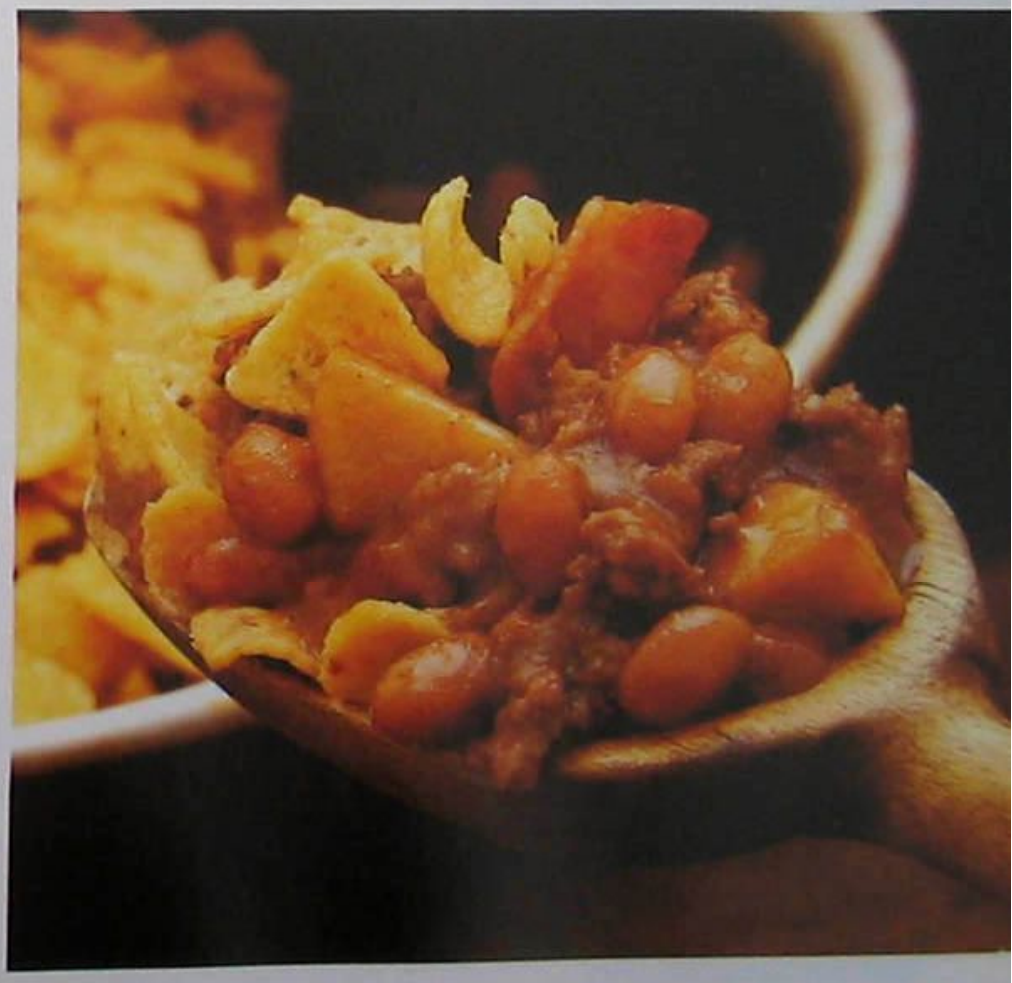
SERVES 4

1 Place pork, garlic and onion in a 1.4L / 2½pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring twice. Drain.
2 Add mushrooms, celery, paprika, cayenne, Tabasco sauce, salt and pepper. Mix well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until the pork is cooked and the vegetables are tender. Stir twice. Stand 3-5 minutes.
3 Stir in soured cream or yoghurt and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes, or until hot.
4 Serve with plain boiled rice.

Slimmer's notes

Adding flavour to food need not add extra calories. Slimmers can enjoy Peppery Pork Pot by using low fat yoghurt and have only 240 Cal / 1010 kJ per portion.

Blazin' Bangers and Beans



Above: *Red-hot Chicken*
Left: *Spicy Scallop Kebab*

Red-hot chicken

26 mins

Standing time: none

1 green pepper, seeded and sliced
1 onion, sliced into rings
1 garlic clove, crushed
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
4 chicken breasts (weighing about 175g / 6oz each), skin removed
227g / 8oz can tomatoes, sieved
dash of Tabasco sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
2.5ml / ½tsp cayenne pepper
15ml / 3tsp cornflour

SERVES 4

1 Place green pepper, onion, garlic and mushrooms in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until just tender. Drain.
2 Arrange chicken pieces over vegetables, bone side up and with the meatiest parts to the edge.
3 Blend together the tomatoes, Tabasco, chilli powder, cayenne and cornflour in a jug. Pour half of mixture over chicken and vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-13 minutes, or until almost cooked, turning once.
4 Remove chicken and set aside. Microwave remaining sauce at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thick; stir every minute.
5 Spoon the sauce over the chicken, cover, and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink.

Red-hot chicken for two: halve all the ingredients. Microwave vegetables at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, chicken for 10 minutes and sauce for 1½ minutes, stirring once. Pour sauce over vegetables and microwave for 4 minutes.

Spicy scallop kebabs

9½ mins

Standing time: none

4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and cut into three
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls honey
30ml / 2tbls white wine
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic powder
12 canned water chestnuts
12 scallops
1 green pepper, cut into 12 pieces
12 wooden cocktail sticks

SERVES 4

1 Place bacon on a layer of absorbent paper. Cover with another layer and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, until partially cooked.
2 Blend soy sauce, honey, wine, ginger and garlic powder in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, until honey melts.
3 Wrap water chestnuts in bacon. Prick membranes and corals of scallops. Assemble kebabs by putting one scallop, chestnut and piece of pepper on cocktail stick.
4 Brush each kebab with honey glaze and coat well. Arrange in a dish with scallops to the outside.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, or until scallops are cooked through and flake easily. Turn kebabs over and baste with honey glaze halfway through cooking.

Fruit from frozen

The freezer makes fruit desserts possible all year round. Now the microwave cuts thawing down to a fraction of the normal time, these luscious desserts are yours for the making — in minutes.

Fruit from the freezer is full of goodness, low in calories — and equally as versatile as its fresh counterpart. Perfect for pies and cakes, fruit salads, snows and sauces, a store of frozen fruit means you will never be at a loss for a dessert. When seasonal soft fresh fruit is scarce or expensive, use frozen instead. It can be thawed quickly by microwave, ready to serve with cream or yoghurt, or transformed into luscious desserts.

A large selection of commercially frozen fruit is available from supermarkets and freezer centres. As the fruit is sold in free-flowing packets, it is possible to weigh out smaller quantities, seal the remainder in the bag and return it immediately to the freezer. When using frozen fruit for recipes here, check that it is unsweetened or you may need to adjust the sugar called for.

Fruit Salad and Nut Crispies

RAY DUNS

Thawing frozen fruit
For even thawing, spread out the frozen fruit in a single layer on a dish. When rearranging during microwaving, take care not to damage the fruit, particularly if using whole in a fruit salad or serving on its own. Microwave for the shortest recommended time before testing. The fruit should be just softened and no longer icy. Standing time after thawing is most important if serving the fruit plain.

Some fruits — raspberries, blackberries and blackcurrants, for example — keep their shape and texture better when thawed than others. Strawberries, on the other hand, are soft and soggy when thawed — although they still taste delicious — and are best puréed.

Tips on thawing frozen fruit

Microwaves *are attracted to water, not ice. As soon as some ice crystals melt they draw energy away from frozen areas. The heated water melts channels through the block of frozen fruit.*

Thawed *areas begin to cook and change colour before frozen parts are thawed, unless the block or free-flowing frozen fruit is broken up or redistributed during microwaving.*

Fruit salad and nut crispies

18½ mins

Standing time: 10-11 mins

2 × 400g / 14oz packets frozen mixed fruit salad

NUT CRISPIES
50g / 2oz self-raising wholewheat flour
50g / 2oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz soft margarine
30ml / 2tbls soft light brown sugar
40g / 1½oz ground hazelnuts
1 small egg, beaten
9 hazelnuts, halved

SERVES 6

1 Turn the frozen fruit salad into a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 14-17 minutes, or until thawed, stirring twice. Stand 4-5 minutes.
2 For the nut crispies, sift together the flours and salt, tipping any bran left in the sieve into the bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and beat to a soft dough with a wooden spoon.
3 Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface. Roll out thinly and cut out 18 heart-shaped biscuits, using a 3cm / 1½in cutter.
4 Arrange six shapes on a microwave baking tray or plate lined with greaseproof paper. Top each with a hazelnut half. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes or until cooked, rotating tray half a turn once. Stand for 2 minutes before cooling on a wire rack. Repeat with remaining shapes.
5 Serve the fruit salad with the biscuits.

VARIATION
Use any combination of frozen fruit that retains its shape well, or combine with fresh or canned. If only using 225g / 8oz frozen fruit, thaw at 20-30% (Defrost), following the Microtips, right.

Microwave times for thawing frozen fruit

FRUIT	AMOUNT	MICROWAVE TIME AT 20-30% (DEFROST)	STANDING TIME
Apple slices	450g / 1lb	8-9 mins	4-5 mins
Blackberries	450g / 1lb	6-8 mins	4-5 mins
Blackcurrants	450g / 1lb	5½-7 mins	2-3 mins
Cherries	450g / 1lb	6½-7½ mins	3-4 mins
Mixed fruit salad	400g / 14oz	7-8½ mins	4-5 mins
Raspberries	350g / 12oz	3-3½ mins	4-5 mins
	450g / 1lb	6-7½ mins	4-5 mins
	900g / 2lb	10-11 mins	4-5 mins
Rhubarb (pieces)	900g / 2lb	16-17½ mins	5-6 mins
Strawberries	450g / 1lb	8-9 mins	6-7 mins

Cook's notes

The time given in the recipe time boxes includes the time taken to thaw frozen fruit. The standing time includes standing after thawing.

Microtips

To thaw half the quantity of frozen fruit given in the chart, microwave for half the recommended time, then continue microwaving, 30 seconds at a time, until thawed. Stand as directed in the chart.

Berries 'n' cream sauce

7½ mins

Standing time: 4-5 mins

This is a refreshing dessert to serve when fresh raspberries are out of season.

450g / 1lb frozen raspberries, thawed (see steps, below)

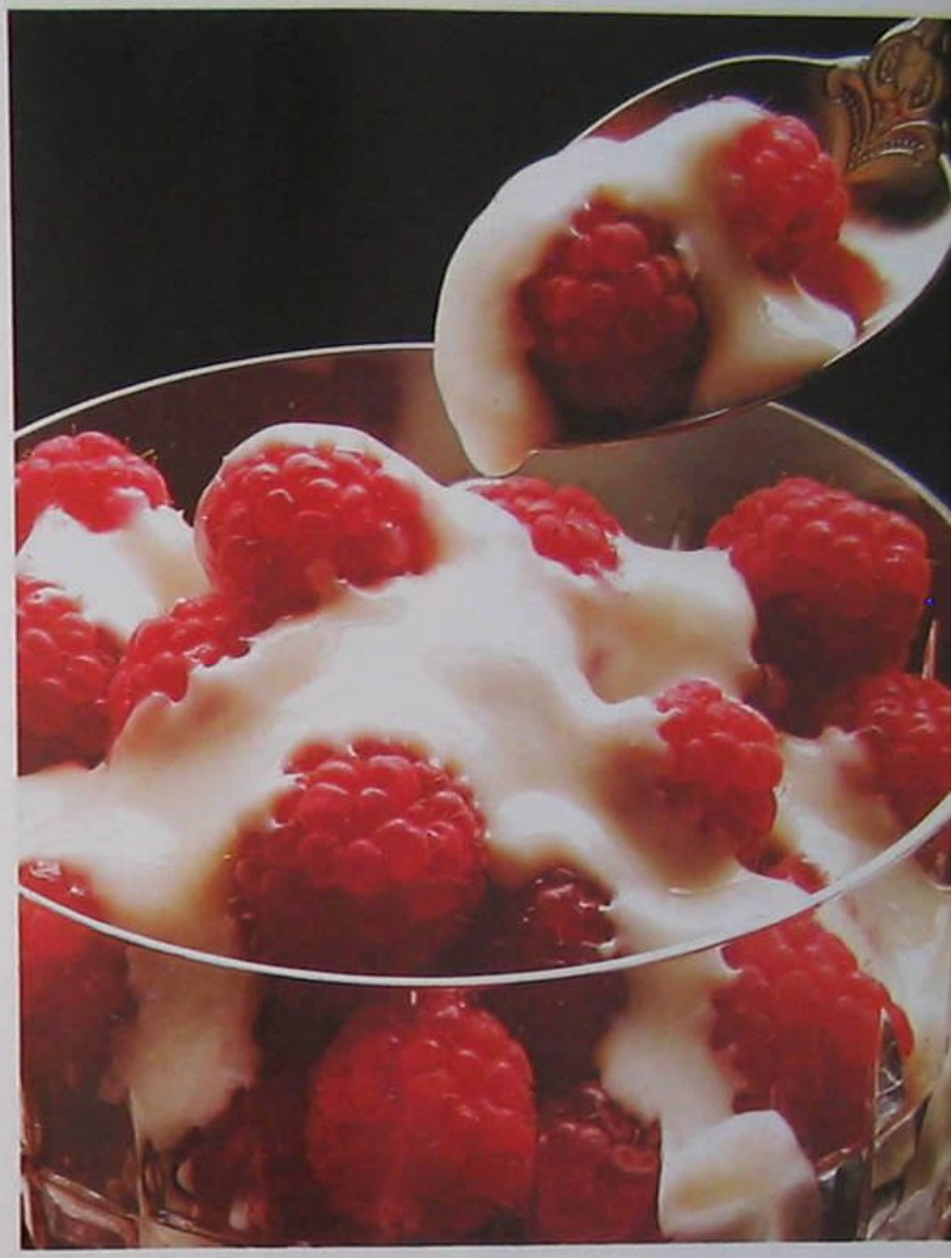
SAUCE
175g / 6oz full-fat soft cheese
60ml / 4tbls soured cream
25-30ml / 5-6tsp milk
grated zest of 1 lemon
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the cheese in a bowl at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes, or until melted.
2 Stir in the soured cream. Gradually add enough milk to give a thick, pouring consistency. Stir in the grated lemon zest and the caster sugar.
3 Divide the raspberries between four serving dishes and pour over the creamy sauce.

Slimmer's notes

Raspberries are a slimmer's treat at 28Cal / 116kJ per 100g / 4oz. If liked, make the sauce with low-fat cheese and yoghurt, and skimmed milk for 85Cal / 355kJ per serving.



How to thaw frozen fruit

RAY DUNS

Tip *the contents of a packet of unsweetened frozen fruit into a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover loosely and place in the microwave cooker.*

Microwave *at 20-30% (Defrost) as directed in the chart opposite, or until fruit is just thawed, rearranging gently once or twice.*

Stand, *covered, as directed in the chart, or until the fruit is no longer icy. Serve with cream or yoghurt, or cook as directed in recipes.*

Strawberry-rum sauce

4½ mins

Standing time: none

This boozy, chunky sauce is especially good over vanilla or strawberry ice cream.

275g / 10oz frozen strawberries
10ml / 2tsp arrowroot
large pinch of grated lemon zest
30ml / 2tbls white rum

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Place the frozen strawberries in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until thawed, stirring with a spoon once. If still icy in parts, leave to stand for 2-3 minutes.
2 Blend arrowroot with 30ml / 2tbls of strawberry juice. Stir into the strawberries with the lemon zest. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until clear and thick, stirring every minute.
3 Stir in the rum. Serve at once or store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks and reheat at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until hot, stirring twice.

Rhubarb snow

13 mins

Standing time: 5-6 mins

Serve this snow in a glass serving dish or individual glasses with crisp, thin ginger biscuits or brandy snaps.

450g / 1lb frozen rhubarb, thawed (see chart and Microtips, page 1656)
60ml / 4tbls redcurrant jelly
1 large egg white
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar

SERVES 4

1 Strain off all liquid from the thawed rhubarb and place the pieces in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl with the redcurrant jelly. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the rhubarb is soft, stirring twice.

Strawberry-rum Sauce

2 Purée the rhubarb in a blender or food processor, pour into a large bowl and leave to cool.
3 Whisk the egg white until stiff, then gradually whisk in the sugar. Fold into the rhubarb purée.

Cook's notes

Rhubarb Snow can be made well ahead of the meal as it holds its texture well. Keep in the refrigerator until required.

Slimmer's notes

A snow makes a popular slimmer's dessert. With no alterations, this light, fluffy dessert gives just 80Cal / 335kJ per serving.

VARIATION

Strawberry and orange sauce: replace the rum with unsweetened orange juice, and use orange instead of lemon zest.

Black cherry sponge

13¼ mins

Standing time: 8-9 mins

100g / 4oz soft margarine
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
150g / 5oz self-raising flour, sifted
5ml / 1tsp almond flavouring
15ml / 1tbls milk
225g / 8oz frozen stoned black cherries, thawed (see chart and Microtips, page 1656) and well drained
45ml / 3tbls icing sugar

SERVES 4-6

1 Grease a 22-23cm / 8½-9in round dish, about 5cm / 2in deep.
2 Put the margarine, sugar, eggs, flour, flavouring and milk into a bowl and beat until just smooth. Spread the sponge mixture in the greased dish.
3 Sprinkle the cherries all over the top, pressing them in lightly. Sift over half the icing sugar.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-11 minutes, or until just set, rotating the dish a quarter turn four times. Stand for 5 minutes.
5 To serve hot, dredge with the remaining icing sugar. To serve cold, cool on a wire rack, then dredge with remaining sugar.

Black Cherry Sponge

PAUL GRATTAN

VARIATIONS

Apple sponge: substitute apple slices for cherries, adding 5ml / 1tsp ground cloves to the sponge instead of the almond flavouring.
Blackcurrant sponge: substitute blackcurrants for the cherries, adding 2.5ml / ½tsp ground nutmeg, 2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon and finely grated zest of an orange to the sponge instead of almond flavouring.

Blackberry glory

10½ mins

Standing time: 4-5 mins

142g / 5oz packet lime jelly, cut into cubes
250ml / 9fl oz water
450g / 1lb frozen blackberries, thawed (see steps, page 1656)
22.5ml / 1½tbls caster sugar
500ml / 18fl oz lemon sorbet

SERVES 4

1 Place three-quarters of the jelly cubes in a 575ml / 1pt jug with 60ml / 4tbls water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, stirring to dissolve jelly. Stir in the remaining water.
2 Lightly oil a 20cm / 8in shallow dish. Pour in the jelly and chill until set.
3 Place half the blackberries in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until soft.
4 Purée the blackberries in a blender, then, to remove the seeds, sieve back into the cleaned bowl. (There should be about 150ml / ¼pt purée.) Add the remaining jelly cubes to the purée together with the sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, then stir well to dissolve the jelly and sugar. Allow the sauce to cool, then chill for 1-2 hours.
5 To serve, drain the remaining blackberries. Remove the sorbet from the freezer. Chop the set jelly into small pieces. Fill four tall glasses with scoops of sorbet, blackberry sauce, chopped jelly and thawed blackberries, finishing with sorbet and blackberries. Top with fan wafers, if liked. Serve immediately.

RAY DUNS

Blackberry Glory

Vegetable soups

Vegetable soups can be a light start to a meal or they can be a meal in themselves. However you serve them, they always make a tasty, welcome dish.

Vegetables add flavour, texture and colour to soups — as well as goodness. They can be used whole, or puréed for a velvety-smooth, thick texture.

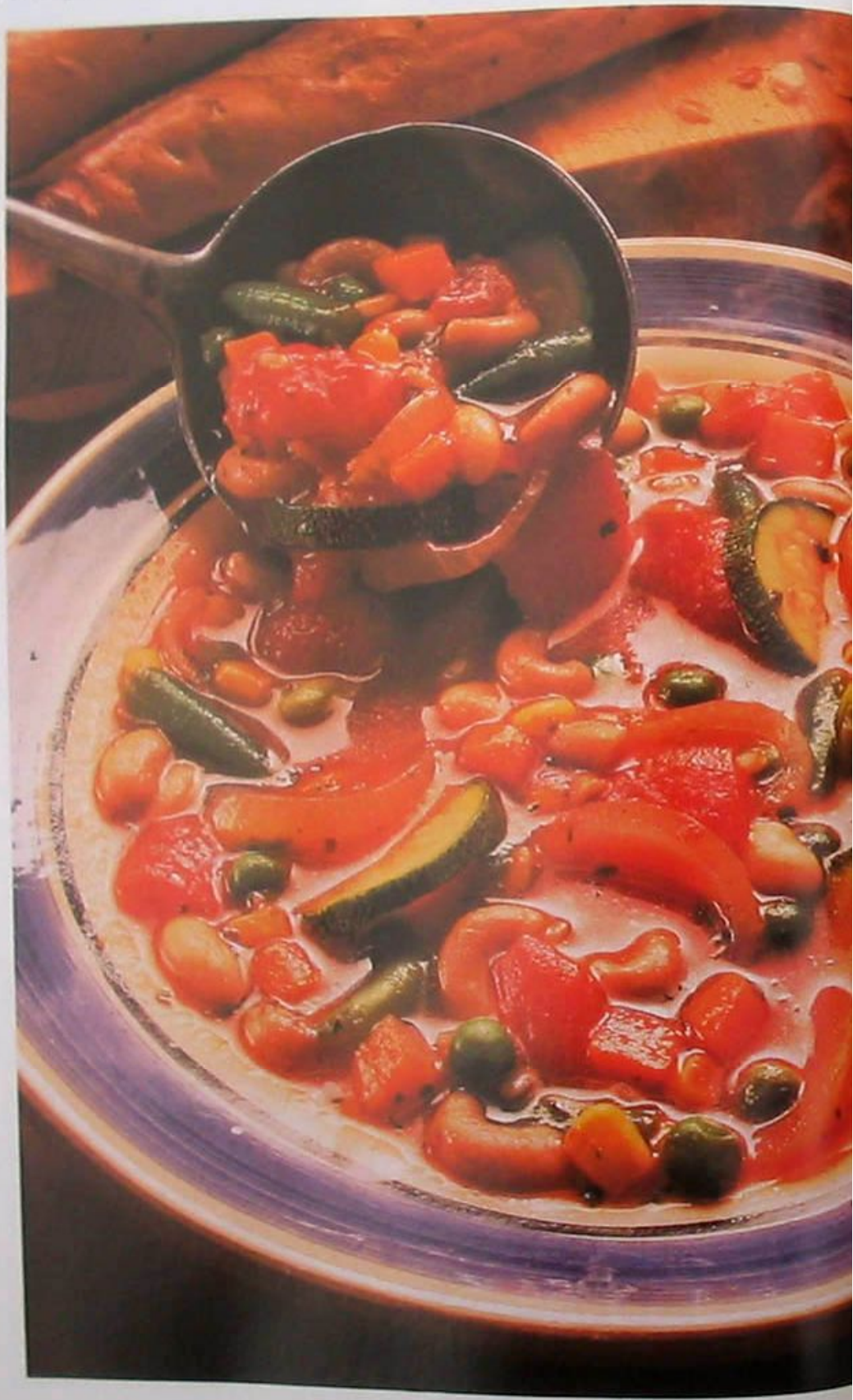
Versatility is the key to these super soups — using seasonal fresh vegetables means there is really no limit to their content and they need never be dull and 'samey'. Use a well flavoured stock, add the herbs and flavourings and cook the vegetables until they are tender. Add rice, pasta or beans for extra bulk, if wished, or try stirring a little cream into puréed soups for extra richness. Alternatively, a simple clear vegetable soup is ideal if you are counting calories.

A home-made stock makes a vegetable soup especially tasty — and adds extra goodness too. Making stock in the microwave is not a fast process but the extra flavour it adds makes it well worthwhile (see Microtips below).

Although you don't have to be a vegetarian to enjoy these delicious soups they seem an obvious choice for a light vegetarian meal or starter. It is easy to replace chicken stock with vegetable stock, if necessary. Use any waste trimmings from vegetables, such as potato or carrot peelings, onion skins and outside leaves of greens. Season and microwave in the same way as chicken stock. Strain through a fine sieve before using.

Microtips

For chicken stock, place carcass bones in a deep casserole and just cover with water. (Less water is needed than conventionally as there is less evaporation.) Bring to the boil at 100% (High), then reduce to 50% (Medium) and microwave for about 30 minutes. Strain.



Cook's notes

Choose floury potatoes for the Creamy Potato Soup as they disintegrate to a soft purée. Do not over-process or it will be 'gluey'.

Hearty minestrone

31 mins

Standing time: none

Served with hunks of bread this soup makes a satisfying supper.

50g / 2oz brown rice
275ml / ½pt hot vegetable stock
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
275g / 10oz frozen mixed vegetables
275ml / ½pt tomato juice
397g / 14oz can tomatoes, chopped
400g / 14oz can cannellini beans
1 courgette, sliced
5ml / 1tsp sugar
10ml / 2tsp Italian seasoning
30ml / 2tbls tomato paste or purée
50g / 2oz wholewheat elbow macaroni
25g / 1oz grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Place the rice and half the vegetable stock in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes. Set aside.
2 Place the onion, garlic and frozen vegetables in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, until tender.
3 Add the remaining ingredients, except the rice and Parmesan cheese. Cover and microwave for 15 minutes until the courgette is tender. Stir twice.
4 Stir in rice. Cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese to serve.

Creamy potato soup

15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
575ml / 1pt hot chicken or vegetable stock
50g / 2oz butter
1 small onion, very finely chopped
275ml / ½pt single cream
salt and pepper
snipped chives, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place the potatoes and 275ml / ½pt of the stock in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes or until tender. Stand for 5 minutes.
2 Place onion and half the butter in a small bowl. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, place the potatoes and their cooking liquid in a food processor or blender. Add the remaining butter and 60ml / 4tbls cream and purée until smooth. Alternatively, mash until smooth.
4 Gradually stir in the onion mixture, the remaining stock and cream. Season well.
5 To serve hot: cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, stirring twice. Or, cover and chill for 2-4 hours and serve cold. Garnish with chives.

Left: *Hearty Minestrone*
Below: *Creamy Potato Soup*

Soup in a mug

4 mins

Standing time: none

275ml / ½pt hot water
75g / 3oz frozen mixed vegetables
5ml / 1tsp beef stock granules
salt and pepper

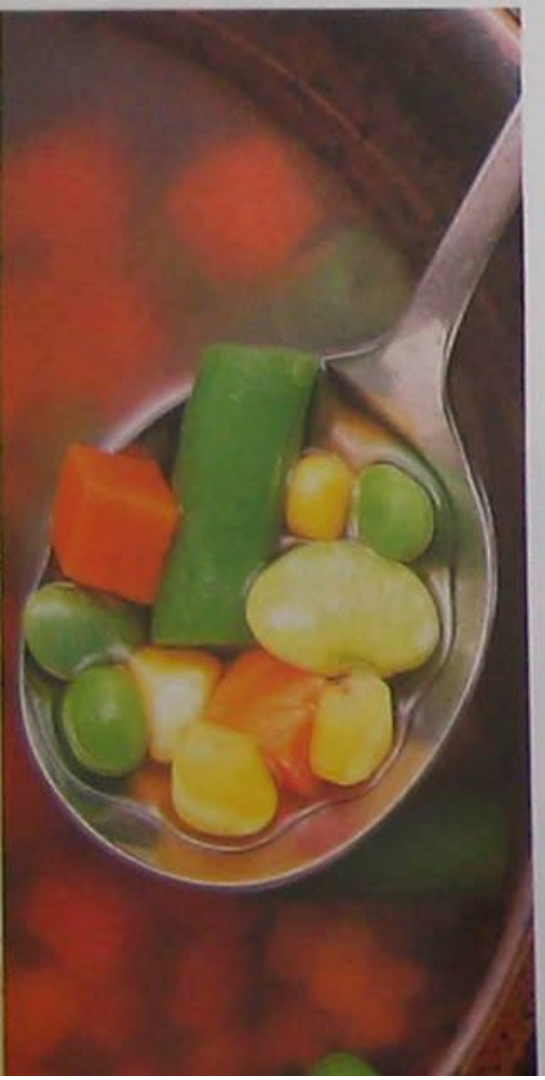
SERVES 1

1 Put water, frozen vegetables and stock granules in a mug or jug.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring once, or until heated through and the vegetables are tender. Taste and season.

VARIATION
Yeast extract makes a change from stock granules; add 2.5-5ml / ½-1tsp according to taste.

Leftover cooked vegetables can be used instead of frozen. Reduce microwave time to 2-3 minutes, just to heat through.

Soup In A Mug



Chunky cabbage soup

22 mins

Standing time: none

1 carrot, sliced
1 onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15g / ½oz butter
1 bay leaf
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
700ml / 1¼pt hot chicken stock
350g / 12oz white cabbage, chopped
100g / 4oz chorizo sausage, thinly sliced
50g / 2oz cooked ham, diced
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the carrot, onion, celery, garlic, butter, bay leaf and basil in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened.
2 Stir in the hot stock and cabbage. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.
3 Stir in the chorizo sausage and ham. Cover and microwave for 4 minutes at 100% (High) or until the meat is heated through. Season with pepper and serve hot.

Slimmer's notes

Soups in mugs are a convenient and warming way to fill-up on a cold day. At only 70 Cal / 295 kJ this soup makes an excellent alternative to conventional packet soups.

Spicy pumpkin soup

23 mins

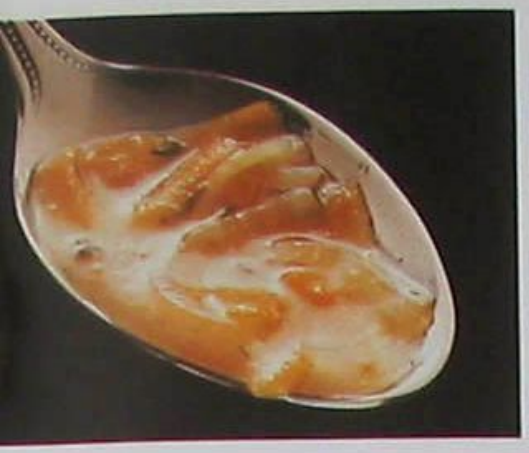
Standing time: none

1.4kg / 3lb pumpkin, halved, seeded, skinned and chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter
275ml / ½pt hot chicken stock
pinch each of ground nutmeg, ginger and allspice
pepper
2.5cm / 1in piece cinnamon stick
30ml / 2tbls single cream

SERVES 4

1 Place the chopped pumpkin flesh in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-17 minutes, or until tender. Stir every 5 minutes.
2 Place the pumpkin in a food processor or blender and purée until smooth. Or mash well until smooth. Return to the casserole.
3 Place the onion and butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the onion is tender.
4 Stir the onions and remaining ingredients into the puréed pumpkin. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-7 minutes, stirring twice, until the flavours have blended and the soup is piping hot. Remove and discard the cinnamon stick before serving.

VARIATION
For spicy carrot soup, use 900g / 2lb thinly sliced carrots instead of the pumpkin. Microwave in 45ml / 3tbls water for 20-25 minutes. Proceed as above, adding an extra 425ml / ¾pt hot stock.



Garlic soup

33 mins

Standing time: none

Garlic soup is popular in Spain and other Mediterranean countries. Although a lot of garlic is used, the soup has a surprisingly mellow flavour. Serve with plenty of crusty bread for a light lunch.

12 garlic cloves
1 onion, thinly sliced
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
300g / 10.6oz can condensed beef consommé
575ml / 1pt hot water
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mustard
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
2 carrots, grated
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine

SERVES 4

1 Crush 2 of the garlic cloves, then place in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl with the remaining whole garlic cloves, the onion and oil. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Add the beef consommé, hot water, mustard and herbs. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 minutes.
3 Stir in the carrots. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, or until the carrot is cooked.
4 Using a slotted spoon, remove the whole garlic cloves. Stir in the wine and serve.

Above from left to right: *Chunky Cabbage Soup, Spicy Pumpkin Soup and Garlic Soup*

Onion soup with cheese

12¼ mins

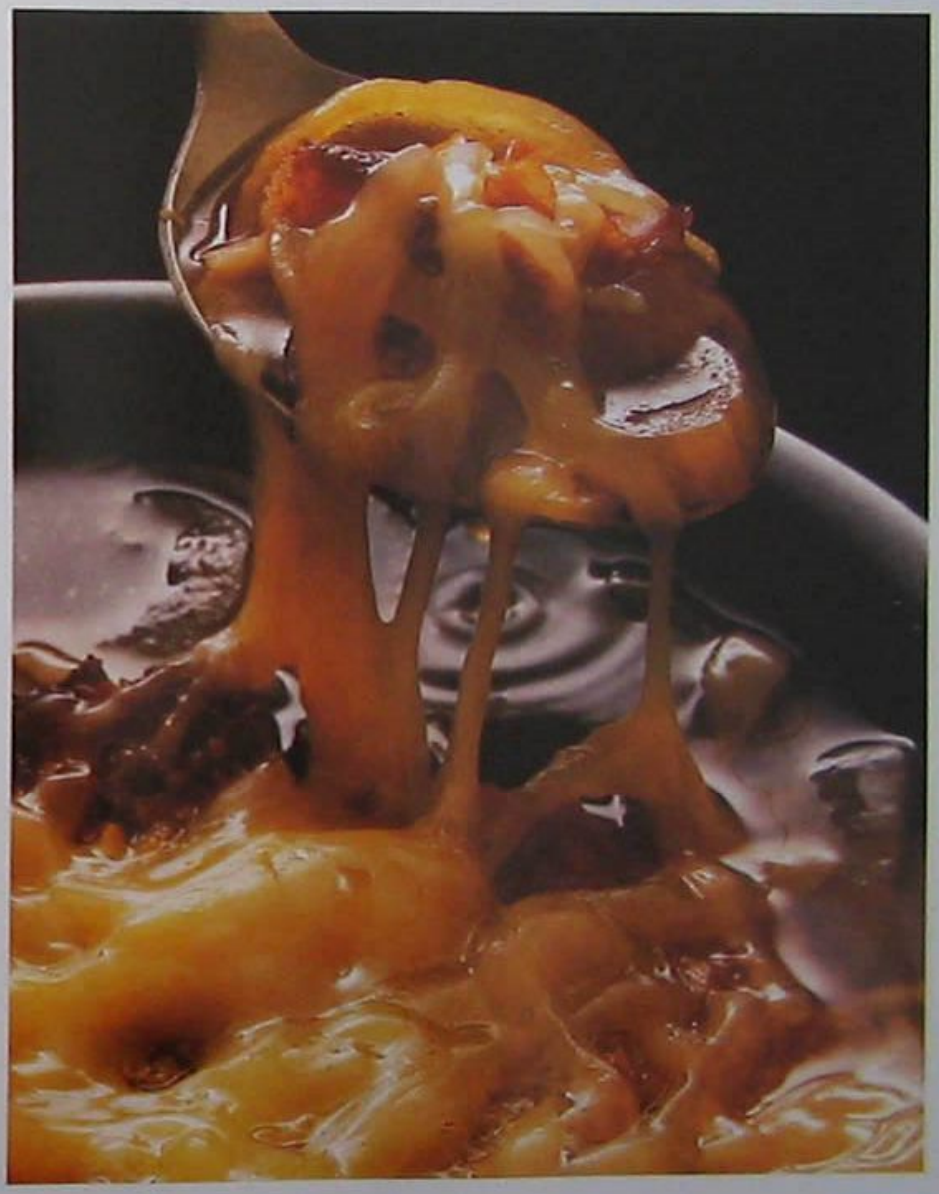
Standing time: none

450g / 1lb onions, thinly sliced
40g / 1½oz butter
2 × 300g / 10.6oz cans condensed beef consommé
275ml / ½pt hot water
5ml / 1tsp sugar
15ml / 1tbls red wine or 7.5ml / ½tbls red wine vinegar
pepper
4 slices French bread
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
100g / 4oz Gruyère cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Place the onions and 25g / 1oz butter in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, or until the onion is tender. Stir twice.
2 Stir in the consommé, water, sugar and wine. Season to taste.
3 Melt the remaining butter in a small, covered bowl at 100% (High) for 10-20 seconds.
4 Brush one side of each slice of bread with melted butter. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Toast under a hot grill until crisp.
5 Ladle the soup into four individual soup bowls. Top each bowl with a slice of toast and sprinkle with a quarter of the Gruyère.
6 Place the bowls in a circle in the microwave and cook, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until the soup is piping hot and the cheese melts. Serve at once.

Onion Soup with Cheese



Fresh tomato soup

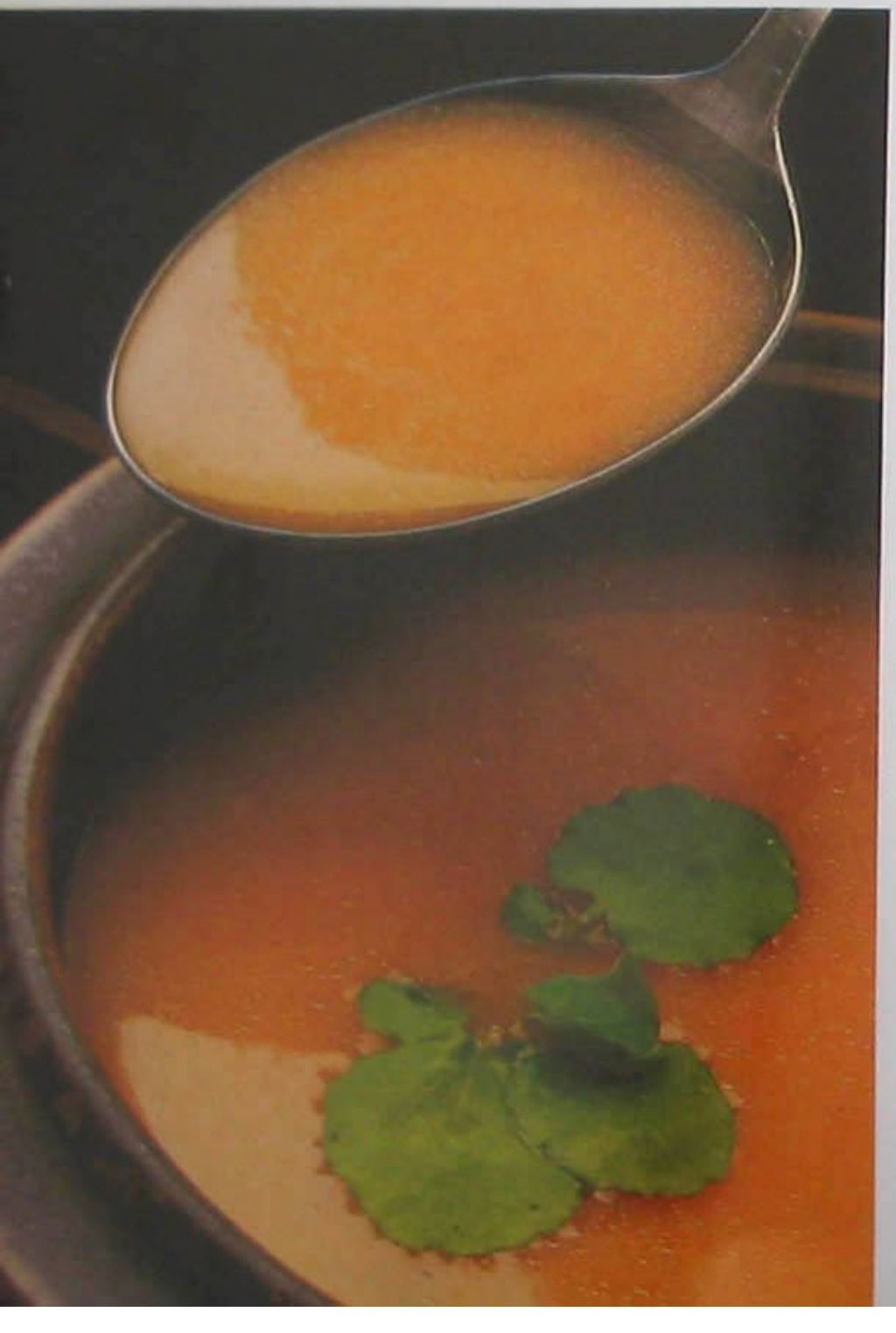
25 mins

Standing time: none

275ml / ½pt tomato juice or vegetable cocktail juice
350g / 12oz tomatoes, chopped
1 onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
25g / 1oz butter
10ml / 2tsp sugar
pepper, to taste
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
700ml / 1¼pt hot chicken or vegetable stock
watercress, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Put the juice, tomatoes, onion, celery and butter in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, until the vegetables are almost tender.
2 Whisk in the sugar, pepper and flour. Gradually stir in the stock. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-23 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and the mixture thickened. Stir three times.
3 Press the soup through a nylon sieve. Serve immediately garnished with watercress.



Swede and carrot soup

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 small swede, weighing 350g / 12oz, peeled and diced
2-3 carrots, grated
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
25g / 1oz butter
700ml / 1¼pt hot chicken stock
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the swede, carrots, onion, garlic, butter and 275ml / ½pt of the stock in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.
2 Place the vegetables and stock in a food processor or blender and purée for a few seconds, until almost smooth but still pulpy. Pour back into the bowl.
3 Stir in the remaining stock, mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until hot. Season and serve.

Left: *Fresh Tomato Soup*
Below: *Swede and Carrot Soup*

Lightning cakes

Mouthwatering and moist, these cakes are made with oil instead of butter. Super-quick to mix and taking just minutes to microwave-bake, they are sure to be a success.

Cakes made with oil are wonderfully easy to mix and the eggs cannot curdle the mixture. The cakes are particularly successful in the microwave and have a moister, softer texture than creaming method cakes. They keep better, too — wrap them closely in stretch wrap and they will stay fresh for 3-4 days. Choose a neutral-flavoured oil — corn oil, sunflower oil or blended vegetable oil are suitable.

It is important not to over-cook, or the cake will be unpleasantly dry and stale quickly. Cakes made with oil are ready when the top is almost dry and springy to the touch. Do not worry about soft, moist patches — these dry out as the cake cools. Cakes need to stand in a cooking dish for about 10 minutes before turning out.

Iced squares

6¼ mins

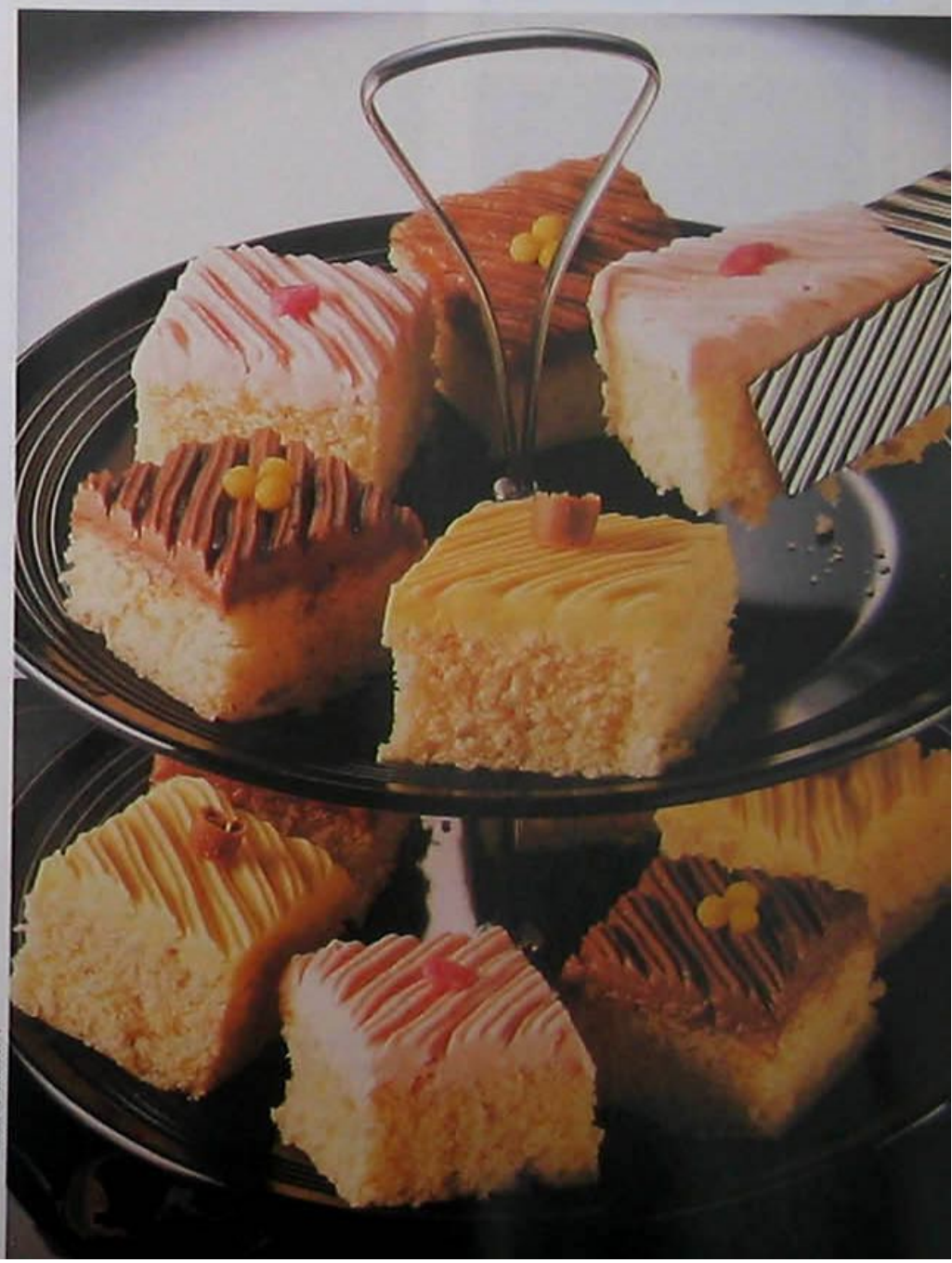
Standing time: 10 mins

175g / 6oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
75ml / 6tbls vegetable oil
3 eggs
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
175g / 6oz caster sugar
75g / 3oz butter
175g / 6oz icing sugar, sifted
grated zest of ½ lemon

MAKES 15 SQUARES

1 Sift flour, baking powder and salt into a mixing bowl.
2 Whisk the oil, eggs and vanilla together. Add to the flour with the sugar. Whisk with an electric beater on low speed for 30 seconds, or until well blended.
3 Spoon the mixture into a 28 × 18cm / 11 × 7in dish, lined with oiled greaseproof paper. Shield the corners with foil.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, giving a half turn every 1½ minutes. Stand for 10 minutes, then turn on to a wire rack; remove the paper and leave to cool.
5 Place the butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 30% (Low) for 15-30 seconds. Beat in the sifted icing sugar and lemon zest.
6 Pipe the icing over the top, then cut the cold cake into 15 squares. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to set, then decorate.

VARIATION
Divide the icing into three. Mix 10ml / 2tsp cocoa powder into one portion and 10ml / 2tsp lemon juice and a few drops pink colouring to the second. Leave the third plain. Ice five squares with plain icing, five with lemon and five with chocolate.



CLINT BROWN

Orange ring cake

4 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

25g / 1oz ginger biscuits, crushed
175g / 6oz plain flour
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
100g / 4oz caster sugar
3 eggs
90ml / 6tbls vegetable oil*
60ml / 4tbls orange juice*
grated zest of 1 orange

SERVES 6-8

1 Grease a 2L / 3½pt ring mould and coat with the biscuit crumbs, pressing them on firmly to make them stick.
2 Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Add all the remaining ingredients. Whisk with an electric beater on low speed for 30 seconds, or beat with a wooden spoon until well blended.
3 Spoon the mixture into the crumb-lined ring mould. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until springy to touch. Rotate a quarter turn 4 times.
4 Leave the cake to stand in the mould for 10 minutes, then turn out on to a wire rack to cool completely (see below right).

VARIATION
Lemony ring cake: omit the orange juice and zest, increase the oil to 105ml / 7tbls and add the grated zest of 1 lemon and 30ml / 2tbls lemon juice. Once the cake is cool, top with Lemon butter cream (see page 1669).

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 70ml / 4tbls plus 2tsp oil and 45ml / 3tbls orange juice.

Cook's notes

With the exception of the Honey cake and Ginger syrup cupcakes, all the cakes here keep well for 3-4 days. Wrap them closely in stretch wrap as soon as they are cool. The Honey cake keeps for 2 days. Cupcakes should be eaten on the day of baking, or frozen.

How to microwave Orange ring cake

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, giving the mould a quarter turn every minute to ensure even baking.*

Leave to stand *for 10 minutes, to complete cooking, before turning the cake out of the mould on to a wire rack. Then leave to cool.*

Coffee cake

4-5½ mins

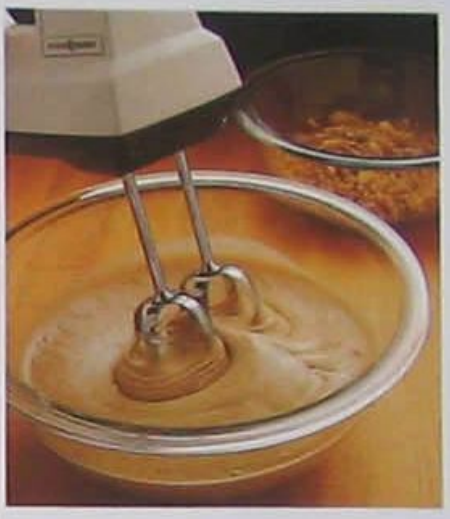
Standing time: 10 mins

A bread cake with a tasty topping.

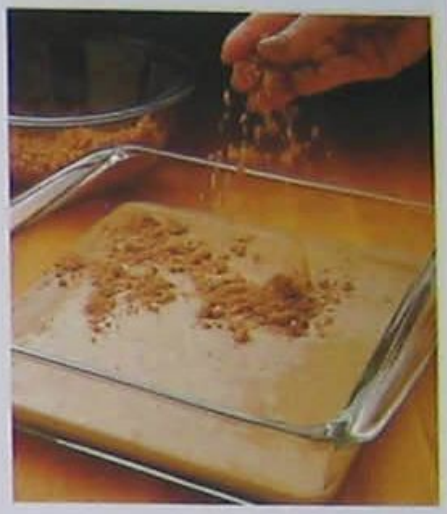
175g / 6oz plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
150g / 5oz soft light brown sugar
2 eggs
90ml / 6tbls vegetable oil
15ml / 1tbls instant coffee granules, dissolved in 90ml / 6tbls hot water
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
50g / 2oz digestive biscuits, crushed

MAKES 8 SLICES

How to microwave Coffee cake



Combine *all the ingredients, except the biscuit crumbs, in a mixing bowl. Beat at low speed for 30 seconds to blend.*



Spoon *the mixture into an oiled, 18cm / 7in square glass dish. Sprinkle evenly with biscuit crumbs.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until top is almost dry and springy. Give quarter turn three times.*

Check *that cake is cooked: only small patches of uncooked batter should appear through the base.*

Leave *the cake to stand in the dish for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.*

Cinnamon carrot cake

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

150g / 5oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
225g / 8oz caster sugar
2 eggs
125ml / 4fl oz sunflower oil
175g / 6oz grated carrot
50g / 2oz finely chopped walnuts
25g / 2tbls raisins

ICING
30ml / 2tbls sunflower oil
15ml / 1tbls milk
100g / 4oz cream cheese
225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted

MAKES 8 SLICES

1 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and cinnamon into a mixing bowl. Add the sugar.
2 Whisk the eggs and oil together and add them to the dry ingredients. Whisk with an electric mixer at low speed for 30 seconds, or beat well with a wooden spoon. Stir in the carrot, nuts and raisins.
3 Spoon the mixture into a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish. Shield the corners with strips of foil. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 20 minutes. Remove the foil and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes, or until the surface is springy to touch. Stand for 5 minutes before turning out on to a wire rack to cool.
4 Combine all the icing ingredients and beat until smooth. Spread on top of the cold cake and refrigerate for 30 minutes, to set.
5 To serve, cut into 8 pieces.

Moist honey cake

11½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

200g / 7oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
175ml / 6fl oz honey
15ml / 1tbls water
2 eggs
100g / 4oz soft light brown sugar
50g / 2oz blanched almonds, chopped

TOPPING
125ml / 4fl oz honey
175g / 6oz butter
100g / 4oz soft light brown sugar

MAKES 8 SLICES

1 Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Whisk the honey, water and eggs together, then add to the flour with the sugar. Whisk with an electric beater on low speed for 30 seconds, until all the ingredients are combined. Stir in the almonds.

2 Spoon the mixture into a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish lined with oiled greaseproof paper. Cover the corners with strips of foil, well sealed and shiny side down.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes, then increase power to 100% (High) for a further 7-8 minutes, or until springy to touch, giving the dish a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Remove the foil 2-3 minutes before the end of the cooking time. Leave to cool in the dish for 10 minutes before turning out.

4 Combine the ingredients for the topping in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, uncovered, until the butter has melted. Beat well to mix. Allow to cool, then beat until creamy. Smooth on to the cake with a round-bladed knife. Refrigerate for 30 minutes, to set. To serve, cut into eight pieces.

Freezer notes

Pack the cold Ginger syrup cupcakes, not more than two layers deep, in a rigid container. Place a sheet of freezer paper between the layers. Cover, label and freeze for up to 2 months.

To serve, arrange six cupcakes at a time in a circle in the cooker and microwave at 30% (Low) for 1-1½ minutes. Add the butter cream and scatter with nuts. Serve at once.

Microtips

Draw a cocktail stick through the cupcake mixture before microwaving. This breaks up the bubbles and prevents large air pockets from forming during the speedy rising process. Avoid overcooking, as this will make the cupcakes dry and tough in texture.

Ginger syrup cupcakes

3 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz plain flour
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
5ml / 1tsp cinnamon
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil*
50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
100g / 4oz golden syrup
1 egg
45ml / 3tbls milk*
50g / 2oz preserved ginger, chopped

LEMON BUTTER CREAM
50g / 2oz butter, softened
grated zest of 1 lemon
100g / 4oz icing sugar, sifted
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
75g / 3oz chopped nuts (optional)

MAKES 12

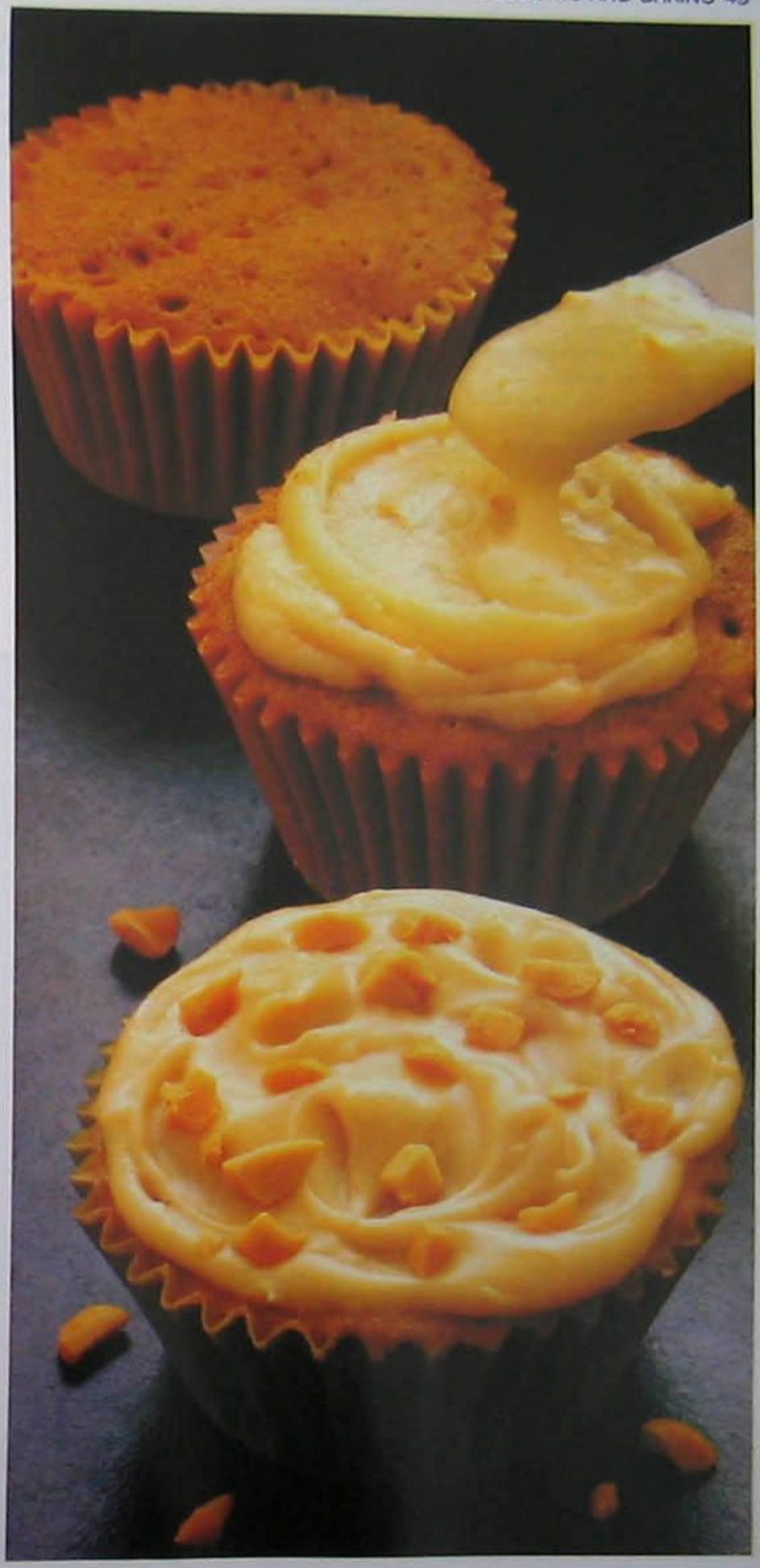
1 Sift the flour, salt, bicarbonate of soda and spices into a mixing bowl. Add the remaining cake ingredients. Beat with an electric whisk at low speed for 30 seconds, or mix with a wooden spoon until blended.

2 Line 12 ramekins or the wells of a microwave muffin tray with 2 paper cake cases each. Divide the mixture between the cases (see Microtips).

3 Arrange six of the cakes in a circle in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until almost dry on top. Give the muffin tray a quarter turn halfway through cooking; rotate or rearrange ramekins. Remove the cakes from the ramekins or tray as soon as they are cooked and leave to cool on a wire rack. Microwave and cool the remaining cakes in the same way.

4 Combine all the cream ingredients, except the nuts, and whisk until smooth. Spread over the top of the cold cakes and scatter with nuts, if liked.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 35ml / 2tbls plus 1tsp of both oil and milk.



Ginger Syrup Cupcakes

Plan ahead: menu 3

Let the microwave help you entertain friends in style. Prepare this buffet spread ahead and freeze it — then microwave-thaw at the flick of a switch for a fuss-free party.

The microwave / freezer combination comes into its own when you are dealing with large numbers. A buffet for 10 or 12 people suddenly becomes much easier. Simply make up and microwave dishes in advance and store in the freezer until the day of the party. Microwave-thawing means food does not have to be removed from the freezer the day before, but can comfortably be thawed out in a few hours.

Choosing a buffet menu

A combination of hot and cold dishes always goes down well at a buffet and is easy to manage with the microwave. Simply thaw out cold dishes in advance, then use the microwave to heat up dishes that are to be served hot. This means it is possible to have cold meats with hot vegetables, for example.

A boned and rolled sirloin is ideal for a buffet party as it slices easily and freezes well. Turkey is another favourite served cold. For extra-speedy thawing, the meat is sliced before freezing. The Sauced Vegetables are a delicious accompaniment to the meat, and are complemented perfectly by Potato Rosettes (see Part 36, page 988), if liked. Warm rolls also go down a treat, using bread straight from the freezer. Two puddings are a good idea for a buffet, particularly when they complement each other. Again, the roulade is easier to thaw and handle if sliced before freezing.

Menu planning

Being organized is the key to success when entertaining a large number of people. To help you,

the meat, roulade and fruit salad can be thawed in advance with the microwave, then arranged on serving plates and set out on the table to complete thawing. Garnish the meat attractively with lettuce, tomato and parsley. Decorate the roulade slices with cherries and the fruit salad with mint sprigs.

The vegetables should be thawed out ahead, ready to microwave-heat with the Potato Rosettes just before serving. Heat the bread rolls while your guests help themselves to the rest of the buffet and place them on the table at the end of the spread. To add a party sparkle, serve a bubbly fun drink: chilled sparkling white wine with unsweetened orange juice is ideal.

From left to right: *Potato Rosettes (see Part 36, page 988), Sauced Vegetables, Turkey Platter and Cold Beef Platter*

Microwave times for 1.8kg / 4lb rolled sirloin

REQUIRED DONENESS	MICROWAVE TIME AT 50% (MEDIUM)*	TEMPERATURE BEFORE STANDING
Rare	27-31 mins	56°C / 133°F
Medium	39-43 mins	64°C / 147°F
Well done	55-59 mins	72°C / 162°F

* Allow 5 minutes at 100% (High) first

Cook's notes

The recipe time boxes refer to microwaving time before freezing. The first standing time refers to standing after the initial cooking. Thawing time is time taken in the microwave; standing after thawing includes time taken for a dish to thaw completely.

Cold beef platter

32 mins

Standing time: 20-25 mins

Thawing time: 15-20 mins

Standing after thawing: 25 mins

1.8kg / 4lb joint of boned and rolled sirloin (boned weight)

SERVES 10-12

1 Place the joint, fat-side down, on a roasting rack. Place joint and rack in a large roasting bag and fasten loosely with a rubber band. Place bag on roasting tray or plate.

2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Insert a microwave thermometer through the bag, if using. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave as directed in the chart above, turning the joint over after half the time. Remove when meat reaches the required temperature.

3 Leave to stand for 20-25 minutes to complete cooking and tenderize the meat so it is easier to carve. If not using a thermometer, test the meat for doneness after standing time by cutting into the centre. Microwave for a further 5 minutes, if necessary.

4 To freeze: carve into thin slices and allow to cool completely. Wrap in a freezer bag or foil, label and freeze up to 3 months.

TO SERVE

Unwrap and place the frozen slices in a shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 15-20 minutes, or until the meat is no longer icy; ease the slices apart after 8 minutes, then rearrange twice. Stand for 25 minutes, or until at room temperature.

Sauced vegetables

23 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 42 mins

450g / 1lb carrots, sliced
90ml / 6tbls water
700g / 1½lb cauliflower, divided into florets
2 leeks, sliced
225g / 8oz broccoli, cut into florets
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, wiped

Sauced Vegetables

SAUCE
575ml / 1pt milk
90ml / 6tbls* cornflour
15ml / 1tbls Dijon mustard
salt and pepper

SERVES 10-12

1 Place the carrots in a 3.4L / 6pt casserole with half the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Add the cauliflower, leeks and remaining water. Continue microwaving for 4 minutes. Add the broccoli and microwave a further 6-7 minutes.
2 Stir in the mushrooms and microwave a further 3-4 minutes, or until vegetables are tender; drain.
3 For the sauce: whisk together the milk and cornflour in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, whisking after 2 minutes, then every minute until thick. Whisk in mustard and seasoning. Pour over the vegetables to coat.
4 To freeze and thaw: see below.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 4½tbls cornflour

Microtips

To thaw and warm frozen bread rolls or baps, arrange five or six rolls in a circle on absorbent paper. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4-5½ minutes, or until hot. Stand 2 minutes and serve. Repeat.

Turkey platter

12 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Thawing time: 12-16 mins

Standing after thawing: 25 mins

If a whole boneless turkey breast is difficult to find, use the same weight of turkey escalopes.

1.4kg / 3lb boneless turkey breast

SERVES 10-12

1 Place the turkey on a roasting rack or shallow plate with the thickest parts to the outside. Place the turkey and rack in a roasting bag and fasten loosely with a rubber band. Place on a roasting tray or plate.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, or until the turkey is cooked through, turning once. Leave to stand for 10 minutes.
3 To freeze: carve into slices and allow to cool completely. Wrap in a freezer bag or foil, seal and freeze for up to 3 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the frozen slices and place in a shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 12-16 minutes, or until the meat is no longer icy; ease the slices apart carefully after 6 minutes, then rearrange them two or three times. Stand for 25 minutes, or until at room temperature.

How to freeze and thaw Sauced vegetables

To freeze: *allow the sauce-coated vegetables to cool completely. Spoon into a rigid freezer container, seal, label and freeze for up to 3 months.*

To thaw: *turn into a large casserole, cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 35-40 minutes, or until no longer icy; break apart gently twice.*

To reheat: *increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 7-10 minutes, or until heated through, stirring once. Stir before serving.*

Chocolate roulade

6 mins

Standing time: 10 mins
Thawing time: 2-3 mins
Standing after thawing: 2 hours

4 large eggs
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
75g / 3oz plain flour
pinch of salt
45ml / 3tbls cocoa powder
425ml / ¾pt double cream, whipped

SERVES 10-12

1 Line two 18 × 30cm / 7 × 12in rectangular dishes with greaseproof paper, overhanging at edges.
2 Place the eggs and sugar in a large bowl and beat until the mixture increases in bulk and holds the trail of the whisk for 3 seconds.
3 Sift together the flour, salt and cocoa powder twice; sift into the whisked egg mixture and fold in with a metal spoon. Pour half the mixture into each dish.
4 Microwave one dish at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until the centre is firm, rotating the dish half a turn once. (The mixture will still be sticky at the edges). Stand 5 minutes; turn out on to greaseproof paper liberally sprinkled with caster sugar. Repeat with remaining dish.
5 Peel off the lining paper from each sponge and trim the edges. Lay greaseproof paper on top and carefully roll up with the paper inside. Cool on a wire rack.
6 When cool, unroll the sponges. Spread one-third of whipped cream over each and roll up again. Pipe remaining cream on top, then cut into five or six slices.
7 To freeze: re-shape each cake, separating the slices with freezer paper. Open-freeze until firm. Wrap and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Unwrap each roulade, removing the freezer paper between slices, and place on two plates. Microwave each plate at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes, or until just soft. Stand for 2 hours.

CLINT BROWN

Party fruit salad

2 mins

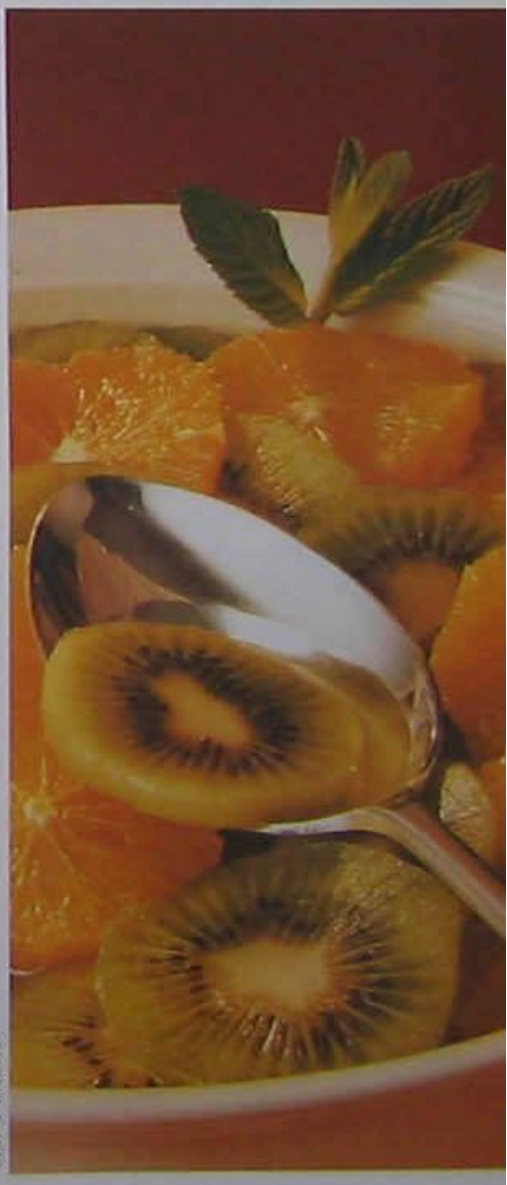
Standing time: none
Thawing time: 7-9½ mins
Standing after thawing: 1 hour

7 large oranges
7 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced
225ml / 8fl oz water
100g / 4oz caster sugar

SERVES 10-12

1 Slice the ends from the oranges and cut away the skin and pith. Cut into thin slices, discarding any pips. Place in a large freezer container. Add the kiwi fruit.
2 Place the water and sugar in a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring once. Cool, then pour over the fruit.
3 To freeze: cover the container, leaving 12mm / ½in headspace; label and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2-2½ minutes. Turn out into a large serving dish. Continue microwaving for 5-7 minutes, stirring once. Stand for 1 hour.



CLINT BROWN

Above: *Chocolate Roulade*
Right: *Party Fruit Salad*

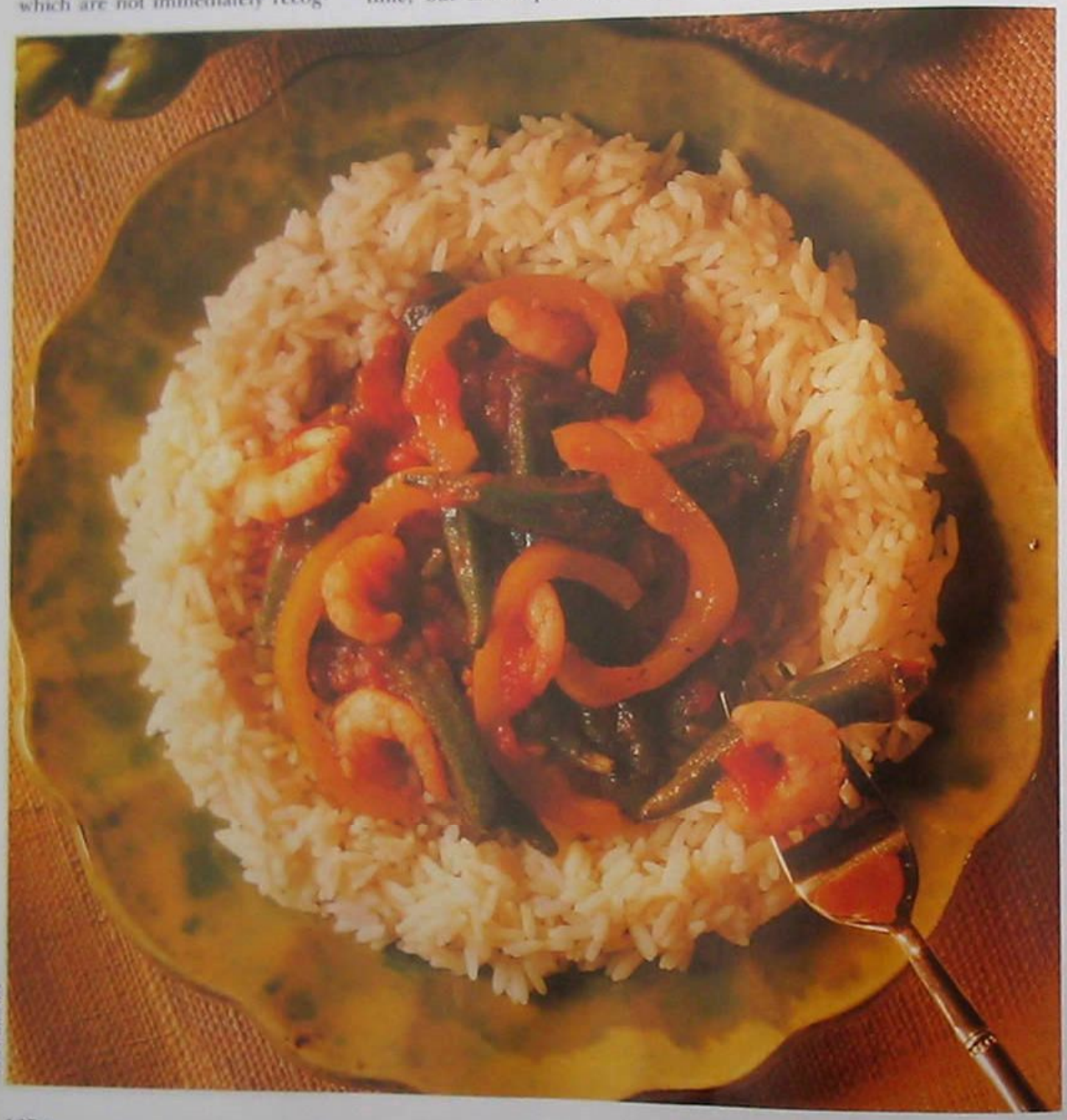
Unusual vegetables

Tired of peas and potatoes? Then why not ring the changes with some less familiar vegetables, such as kohlrabi, okra or smokey-flavoured Jerusalem artichokes. It's easy with the microwave.

Be adventurous with your cooking and experiment with some of the more unusual vegetables around. Don't be put off by knobbly-looking roots, which are not immediately recognizable, as many of these vegetables have quite unique flavours.

There are advantages to cooking them by microwave, too, as this not only cuts down on cooking time, but also captures all their distinctive flavour. For some out-of-the-ordinary vegetables, try sticky okra, nutty Jerusalem artichokes, kohlrabi or sweet potatoes.

Prawn and Okra Gumbo



TINT BROWN

Microwave times for unusual vegetables

TYPE	AMOUNT	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	STANDING TIME
Jerusalem Artichokes			
6mm / ¼in slices	450g / 1lb	6-8 mins	3-5 mins
	900g / 2lb	13-15 mins	3-5 mins
Kohlrabi			
6mm / ¼in slices	450g / 1lb	5-6 mins	3-5 mins
	900g / 2lb	9-11 mins	3-5 mins
Okra (fresh)			
whole	450g / 1lb	7-9 mins	3-5 mins
sliced	450g / 1lb	7-8 mins	3-4 mins
Okra (canned)	400g / 14.1oz	2-4 mins	1-2 mins
Sweet potatoes			
whole	450g / 1lb	7-9 mins	3-5 mins
	900g / 2lb	11-13 mins	3-5 mins
2.5cm / 1in	450g / 1lb	6-8 mins	2-3 mins
diced	900g / 2lb	10-12 mins	2-3 mins

Okra

Okra, also known as ladies' fingers, is often used to bind stews and sauces or to thicken soups because of its gelatinous sap. Inside the okra pod is a sac which releases this sap when it is cut or pierced.

Select clean, young, white or green pods, 5-10cm / 2-4in long. The tip of tender okra bends when pressed and the pod snaps easily. Do not buy dull, dry, shrivelled, flabby or discoloured pods. Keep okra cool and humid, but not too cold. Store, uncovered, in the crisper and use as soon as possible or within 2 days.

Prawn and okra gumbo

15 mins

Standing time: none

Okra puts the gum in gumbo! A gumbo is a thick soup made with okra. This soup is served over rice as a hearty main course.

450g / 1lb okra
225g / 8oz can tomatoes, chopped
150ml / ¼pt boiling chicken stock
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small yellow pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
large pinch of hot chilli powder
salt and pepper
225g / 8oz prawns

SERVES 4

1 Trim the stalks from the okra, without cutting into the pod. Place in a bowl with the tomatoes, stock, garlic, pepper strips, thyme, sugar and chilli powder. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-15 minutes, or until the okra is tender, stirring twice.

2 Season and stir in the prawns. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes. Serve hot.

How to microwave okra

Wash *the okra and trim the tip and stem ends of pods, taking care not to pierce the sac if okra is to be cooked whole. (Drain canned okra, reserving 30ml / 2tbls liquid for cooking.)*

Slice *okra into 12mm / ½in pieces. Place in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole with 45ml / 3tbls water, or reserved canned liquid. Cover and microwave as directed in the chart, above.*

Let stand, *covered, for 3-5 minutes. Toss whole pods with 25g / 1oz butter and season to taste, or top with grated cheese or a tomato sauce. Use sliced in stews to thicken the liquid.*

Sweet potatoes

Sweet potatoes have brown to red-brown skin and moist orange flesh. Their sweet flavour makes a good accompaniment to roast meats and they can also be turned into fun puddings.

Cooking sweet potatoes

Microwave sweet potatoes whole or diced. If whole, prick the skins and place on absorbent paper to absorb any moisture; rotate twice during microwaving. Peel away skins as soon as they are cool enough to handle. Microwave cubes in a covered bowl with 45ml / 3tbls water, stirring twice. Toss with herbs and melted butter, yoghurt or soured cream sauce and serve as a vegetable.

Sweet Potato Pie

Sweet potato pie

28½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Serve this sweet, spicy pie as a pudding, topped with cream, yoghurt, ice cream or custard.

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

FILLING

900g / 2lb sweet potato, cooked (see chart, page 1675), mashed
100g / 4oz soft brown sugar
2 eggs
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
350ml / 12fl oz evaporated milk
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp ground nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
large pinch of ground cloves

TOPPING

30ml / 2tbls shredded coconut
30ml / 2tbls golden syrup

SERVES 8

1 Put the sweet potato into a large bowl and beat in the sugar, eggs, flour, milk and spices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes, stirring twice until the mixture is thickened.

2 Spread the mixture evenly in the cooked pastry case. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes, or until the filling is just set in the centre, rotating the dish a quarter turn four times.

3 Sprinkle with the coconut and drizzle over the syrup. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to melt the syrup. Serve hot or cold as a dessert.

VARIATION

For a slightly less sweet pie, use half evaporated milk and half fresh milk. Add 15-30ml / 1-2tbls orange-flavoured liqueur or brandy for a special taste.

How to select and store sweet potatoes

Choose *chunky, medium-sized sweet potatoes, which are firm, smooth and tapered at the ends. Avoid decayed spots as these affect the flavour. Keep in a cool, dry place, for up to 1 week, but do not refrigerate.*

Sweet potato pudding

27¾ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
900g / 2lb sweet potatoes, cooked (see chart, page 1675), mashed
1 egg, beaten
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
45ml / 3tbls orange juice
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp vanilla flavouring

TOPPING
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped

SERVES 4

1 Put the butter into a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until melted. Mix into the potatoes with the egg, walnuts, orange juice, sugar, spices and flavouring. Turn into a 1.1L / 2pt casserole.
2 For the topping: mix the flour and sugar in a bowl; rub in butter, then stir in the walnuts. Sprinkle over the potato mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 12-14 minutes, or until the pudding is set, rotating the casserole a quarter turn three times. Serve hot.

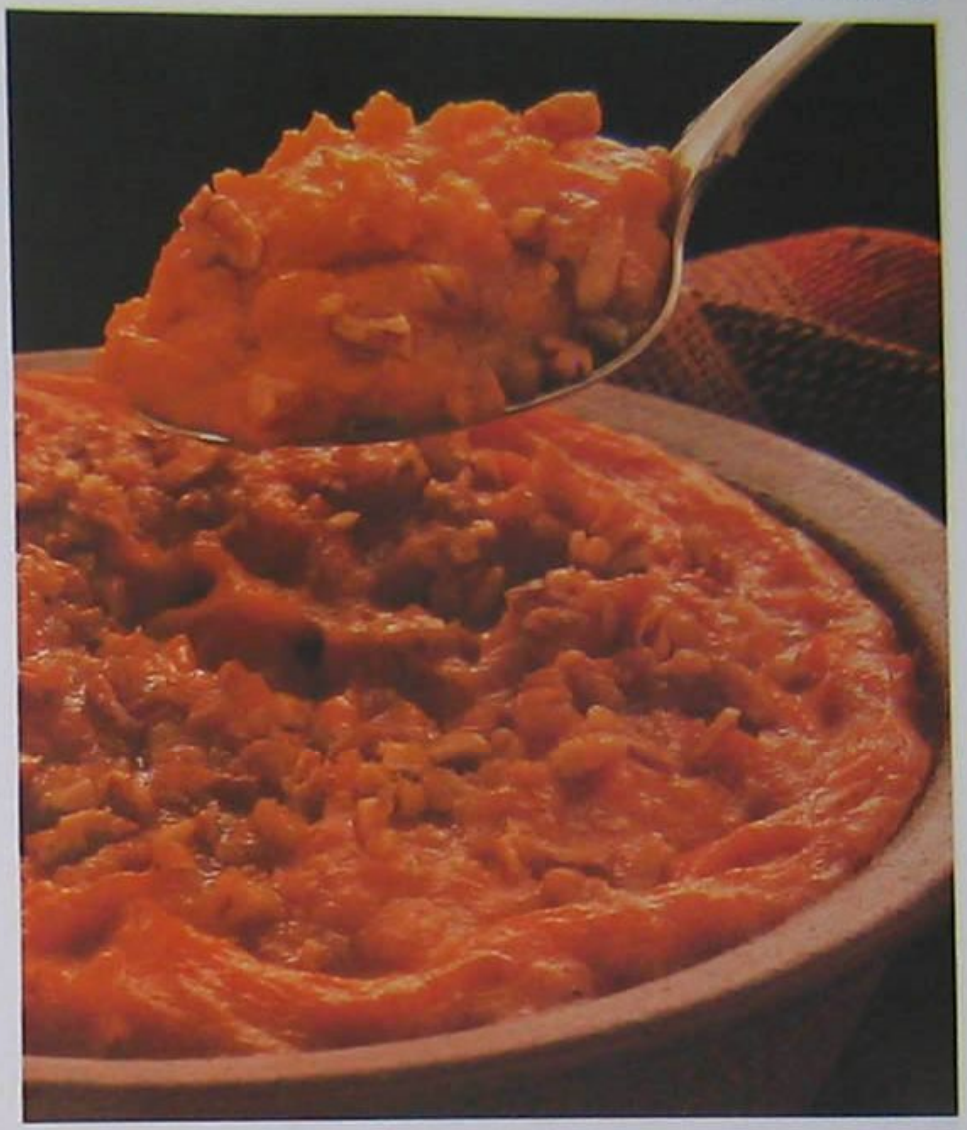
Sweet potato puff

29 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
large pinch of ground cinnamon
large pinch of ground nutmeg
275ml / ½pt milk
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar
450g / 1lb sweet potato, cooked (see chart, page 1675), mashed
4 eggs, separated
50g / 2oz toasted almonds, coarsely chopped
30ml / 2tbls icing sugar

SERVES 4-6



1 Microwave the butter in a 1.7l / 3pt casserole at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Stir in the flour and continue microwaving for 45-60 seconds, or until bubbly.
2 Gradually whisk in the spices and milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until thickened, whisking once or twice. Beat in the sugar and sweet potato, then beat in the egg yolks one at a time.
3 Using clean beaters, whisk the egg whites until just stiff. Fold into the mixture using a large metal spoon. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 18-20 minutes, or until just set, rotating the casserole a quarter turn four times.
4 Sprinkle with the nuts and sift over the icing sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Eat hot or cold.

Above: *Sweet Potato Pudding*
Right: *Sweet Potato Puff*

Kohlrabi

Kohlrabi is part of the cabbage family, but has a bulbous stem and a mild, turnip-like flavour. The stalk has a crisp texture and mild flavour. Young, small kohlrabi leaves may be microwaved like spinach leaves.

Choose firm, small globes and do not wash until ready to cook. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and use within a few days. If tops are attached, remove and store in a covered container in the crisper for up to 2 days.

Kohlrabi gratin

17½ mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb kohlrabi, cubed
1 bay leaf
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried tarragon
275ml / ½pt boiling water
200ml / 7fl oz milk
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper
25g / 1oz sunflower seeds or nuts

SERVES 4

1 Place the kohlrabi in a bowl with the bay leaf, tarragon and boiling water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until just tender, stirring once. Strain the liquid into a measuring jug and make up to 425ml / ¾pt with milk.

2 Put the butter into a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the flour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until bubbly.

3 Gradually whisk in the milk mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, until thickened and well boiled, whisking two or three times. Stir in half the cheese and seasoning. Mix in the cooked kohlrabi, then turn into a serving dish.

4 Cover with the remaining cheese and sprinkle with sunflower seeds or nuts. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until heated through and the cheese is melted.

How to microwave kohlrabi

Trim *the root ends and stems above the bulbs of the kohlrabi. Scrub and peel the bulb. Cut into 6mm / ¼in slices. Place in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole.*

Add *45ml / 3tbls water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) as directed in chart, page 1675, or until tender; stir twice. Stand 3-5 minutes; drain.*

Jerusalem artichokes

Jerusalem artichokes belong to the sunflower family. They have a very distinctive, 'smokey' flavour. They make a popular vegetable accompaniment — try them simply with butter and chopped parsley, or in a cheese or tomato sauce, or puréed and flavoured with nutmeg.

Peeling is optional, but the skins of Jerusalem artichokes do toughen slightly during cooking. Look for the least knobbly roots when buying to ease peeling if necessary. Refrigerate in a sealed plastic bag and use within a week.

Palestine soup

31½ mins

Standing time: none

550g / 1¼lb Jerusalem artichokes
1 onion, thinly sliced
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 small potato, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls dry white wine
275ml / ½pt boiling chicken stock
425ml / ¾pt milk
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls water
150ml / ¼pt single cream
salt and pepper

CROÛTONS
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
3 large slices wholemeal bread, diced
30-45ml / 2-3tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4-6

1 Peel the artichokes, slice and keep well covered in water with a squeeze of lemon juice added.
2 Place the onion and butter in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
3 Drain and dry the artichoke slices, then stir into the onion together with the potato. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring once. Add the wine and continue microwaving for 1 minute.
4 Stir in the boiling stock and milk. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-17 minutes or until all the vegetables are tender. Blend or process until smooth and return to the cleaned bowl.
5 Blend the cornflour with the water in a small bowl. Stir into the soup. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring twice. Stir in the cream. Microwave a further 1 minute to heat. Season.
6 For the croûtons: melt the butter in a covered shallow dish at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir in the diced bread. Continue microwaving for 4-5 minutes, or until crisp and lightly golden, stirring several times. Sprinkle the parsley over the soup and serve with croûtons.

Cook's notes

To avoid waste when peeling artichokes, try not to cut off the small knobs. Once peeled or sliced the artichokes discolour quickly. To prevent this, place them immediately in a bowl of cold water with a few drops of lemon juice.

To serve Jerusalem artichokes as a vegetable accompaniment, microwave as directed in steps below, then serve with butter and seasoning, lemon juice and parsley or a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese.

How to microwave Jerusalem artichokes

Scrub *the artichokes under running water and peel, if liked. Cut into 6mm / ¼in slices. To prevent darkening, place immediately in a bowl of cold water with a few drops of lemon juice.*

Drain *the slices. Place in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole with 45ml / 3tbls water and 2.5ml / ½tsp lemon juice. Cover and microwave, then stand as directed in the chart, page 1675; drain.*

STAR RECIPE

Medallions of pork

Juicy pork tenderloin cooks perfectly in the microwave — and these elegant medallions make an ideal dinner party dish, served as they are with a rich, wine-flavoured sauce and seasonal vegetables.

With their succulent texture and sophisticated flavour of green peppercorns, these pork medallions are sure to impress.

Choose a neat, thick pork fillet (or tenderloin, as it is sometimes called), and cut in thick, even slices. They will appear to be too thick, but once beaten with the peppercorns pressed into the flesh, rather in the style of steak au poivre, they will make perfectly-sized medallions.

If you do not have a browning dish, you will need to colour the outsides of the medallions, either by brushing with a browning agent such as soy sauce or by searing quickly in a conventional frying pan or on a hot griddle. If using soy, microwave for the same time.

The peppery flavour of the meat is complemented by the rich Madeira sauce — if you do not have any Madeira, use a good sweet sherry for a similar effect.

Serve the medallions with a selection of lightly-cooked fresh vegetables to enjoy a combination of delicious flavours at their best. Try mange tout peas, tiny new potatoes in their skins or thin green beans to give the whole dish an elegant and fresh appearance.

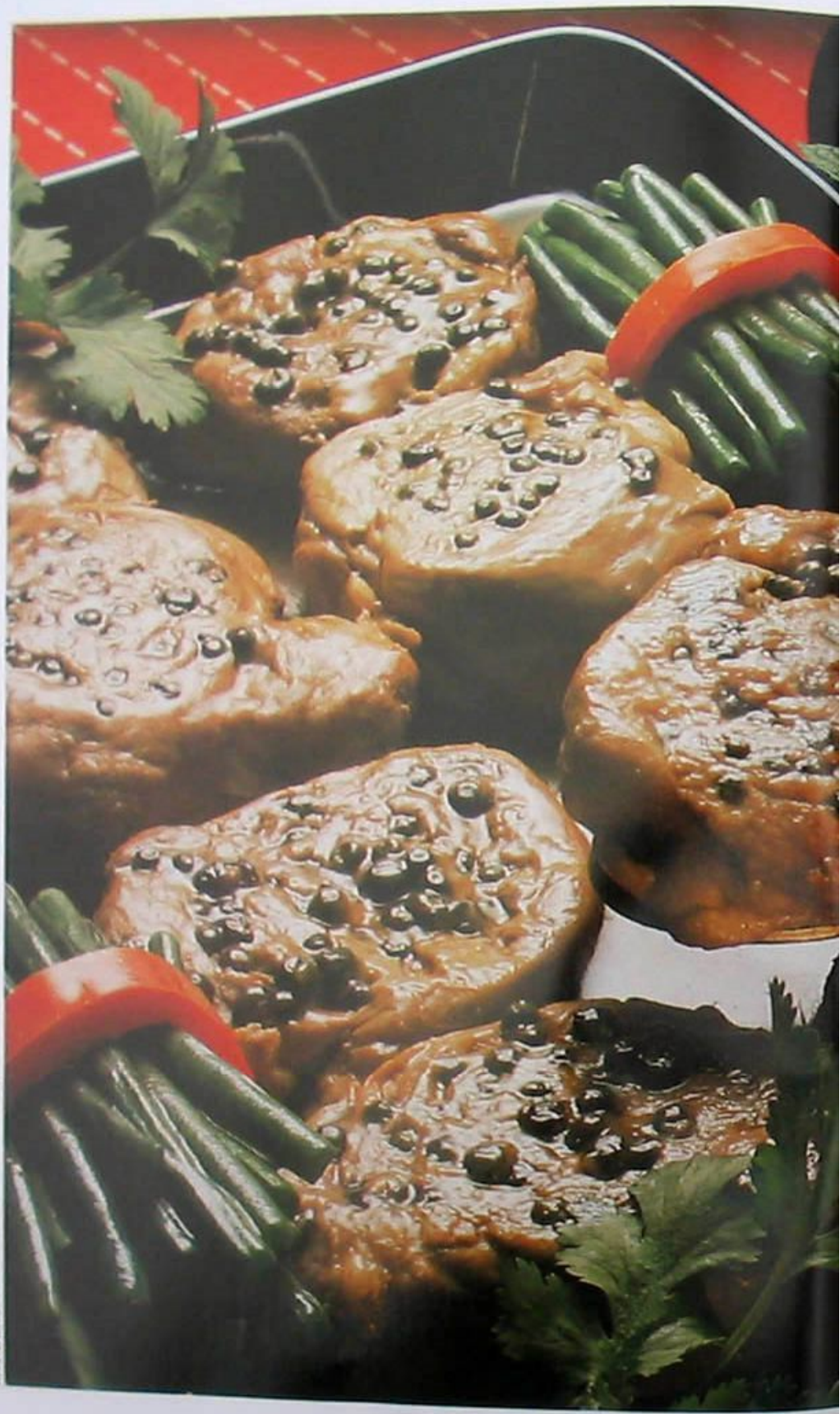
Medallions of pork

11 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

8 × 4cm / 1½in thick medallions, cut from a pork fillet
45ml / 3tbls green peppercorns, lightly crushed
15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls olive oil

SAUCE
150ml / ¼pt Madeira
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
salt and pepper



RAY DUNN

Cook's notes

This classic dish gets its name from the shape of the meat, which is sliced into large, thick medal shapes before it is beaten out.

How to microwave Medallions of pork

Sprinkle *the medallions with peppercorns. Cover meat with stretch wrap and beat peppercorns into the flesh using a rolling pin or the base of a small bowl.*

Pre-heat *a microwave browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the butter and oil to the dish and swirl around to coat base.*

Add *medallions and brown on both sides, pressing down well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes; turn the medallions over after about 2 minutes and give dish a quarter turn.*

Transfer *the medallions, pepper side up, to a heated serving dish. Cover with foil and stand for 2 minutes. Gradually blend Madeira with cornflour, stirring until smooth.*

Strain *any juices from the browning dish into the Madeira mixture. Mix well, then microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until smooth and thick, stirring once. Season to taste.*

Serve *the sauce separately, or arrange the medallions on a serving dish and pour the sauce around them in a neat pool. Serve hot with crisply cooked vegetables.*

Cooking with cheese 2

Take those familiar cheeseboard cheeses and turn them into mouthwatering pizzas, unusual appetizers or tempting snacks. A buttery Brie or Bel Paese are really delicious served hot.

RAY DUNS

There are literally hundreds of soft and semi-soft cheeses, ranging from famous white cheeses like Camembert to sophisticated blues like Gorgonzola. All have their own special characteristics and add their distinctive flavour to many delicious dishes.

Storing

Soft and semi-soft cheeses do not store well, they ripen quickly — and overripen quickly too. Buy in small quantities. Store, closely wrapped in stretch wrap or foil, in the dairy compartment of the refrigerator and use within 2-3 days. Use at room temperature.

Microwaving

Most of the cheeses here do not need to be cooked so much as heated and softened to the point of melting: the even cooking of microwaves is ideal for this. Heating the cheese through emphasizes the flavour and gives a wonderful buttery texture. Blue cheeses have a tendency to separate if overcooked, so watch them carefully. Mozzarella, on the other hand, changes its character when cooked and develops a deliciously stringy consistency.

The high fat content of many cheeses attracts microwaves, so a gentle 50% (Medium) is the safest setting to choose.

Camembert crunchies

5 mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz fresh white breadcrumbs
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
225g / 8oz Camembert cheese, cut into 25g / 1oz wedges

Camembert Crunchies

30ml / 2tbls plain flour
pinch of cayenne pepper
1 egg, beaten
2 dessert apples, cored and quartered, to serve

SERVES 4-8

1 Put the Camembert wedges into the freezer for about 1 hour.
2 Place the breadcrumbs and butter in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until golden brown, stirring every minute.
3 Combine the flour and cayenne pepper in a bowl and put the beaten egg in a saucer. Roll each wedge of cheese in the flour, then in the beaten egg. Coat with the browned breadcrumbs.
4 Arrange the cheese in a circle on a roasting rack, with the thickest parts to the outside. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute or until heated through, rotating the dish once. Serve with the apples.

Hot cheese toasties

7 mins

Standing time: none

Serve these hot snack sandwiches with a crisp green salad.

225g / 8oz Bel Paese cheese, in 6mm / ¼in thick slices
8 large granary bread slices, crusts removed, halved
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
10ml / 2tsp bottled brown sauce
5ml / 1tsp Dijon mustard
salt and pepper, to taste

SERVES 4

1 Lay the cheese slices on eight bread halves, leaving a slight margin around the edges. Press the remaining slices firmly on top to make sandwiches.
2 Melt the butter or margarine in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Brush half the butter mixture generously over one side of each sandwich.
3 Preheat a 25cm / 10in round browning griddle or large oblong browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Press the buttered side of each sandwich down on the base of the dish. Brush the other side with butter mixture and turn the sandwiches over.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, until really hot and the cheese is just beginning to melt. Serve immediately.

VARIATION
Try a combination of Mozzarella and Gorgonzola as a tasty alternative to Bel Paese cheese. For a herby flavour, sprinkle a few finely snipped chives or chopped parsley over the cheese slices.

A selection of soft and semi-soft cheeses

Bel Paese: a close-textured Italian cheese; pale yellow with a slightly darker yellow rind. Mild flavoured, it cooks well and can often be interchanged with Mozzarella.
Brie is one of the famous French, soft white cheeses. It has a white rind with a slightly floury surface mould. It is full-flavoured and slightly tangy. The centre should be uniformly creamy; avoid cheeses which have a hard white or runny centre.
Camembert: similar in appearance to Brie. Imitated all over the world, it is usually served as part of a cheeseboard, but its full fruity flavour is also delicious cooked.
Dolcellate: a mild blue-veined Italian cheese. Do not overcook.
Feta: a white, crumbly Greek cheese with a slightly sharp salty flavour. Traditionally made from ewe's milk although it can be made from cow's or goat's milk.
Gorgonzola: a soft, creamy Italian blue cheese. The subtlety of the creamy cheese blends nicely with the tang of the blue veins. Again, commonly found on a cheeseboard, but is delicious with pasta.
Mozzarella: this soft, white cheese has some of the best cooking qualities of all the soft cheeses. Originally from Italy, it is now made in many countries.
Port Salut: a fairly firm textured French cheese. Creamy yellow inside with a golden yellow rind, it has a full, yet mild, flavour.

Left to right: *cheeses listed in order*

RAY DUNS

Cheesy fish lasagne

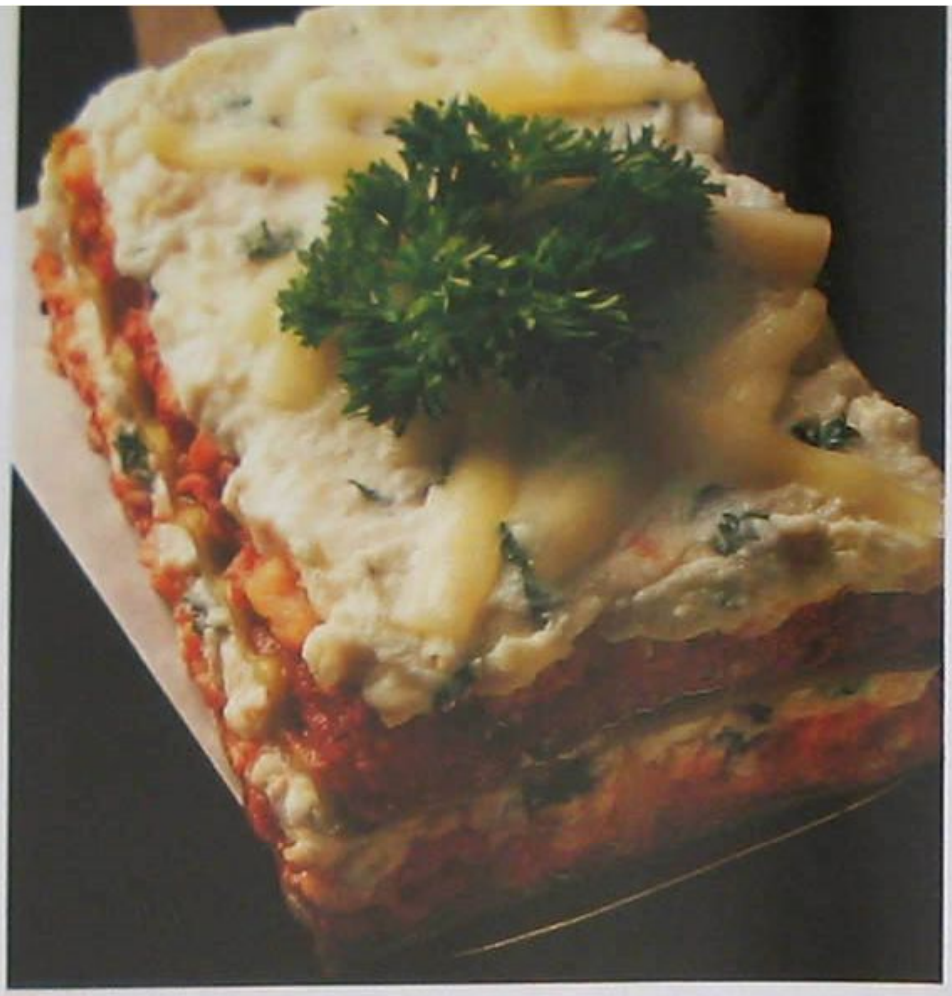
42 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

6 sheets of spinach lasagne
350g / 12oz haddock fillets
425g / 15oz ricotta cheese
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
30ml / 2tbls milk
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic powder
440g / 15½oz can salmon, drained and flaked
100g / 4oz Mozzarella, grated

TOMATO SAUCE
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
60ml / 4tbls tomato purée or paste
1.5ml / ¼tsp fennel seeds
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated lemon zest
pinch of cayenne pepper
salt and pepper
1 bay leaf

SERVES 4-6



How to microwave Cheesy fish lasagne

Cook *the lasagne conventionally; drain and reserve. Combine all the ingredients for the Tomato sauce in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) 10 minutes, stir once.*

Arrange *the haddock in a 23cm / 9in dish, thickest parts to outside. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, until the fish flakes easily. Leave to cool.*

Combine *the ricotta cheese, parsley, milk, Parmesan cheese and garlic powder in a bowl. Discard the bay leaf from the Tomato sauce. Drain, skin and flake the cooked haddock.*

Place *three sheets of lasagne in the base of a 23cm / 9in square dish. Top with half the tomato mixture and half the flaked haddock and salmon.*

Add *half the ricotta mixture and half the grated Mozzarella. Add the remaining lasagne sheets and repeat the layers, finishing with Mozzarella.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 28-30 minutes, or until well heated through. Rotate a half turn every 10 minutes. Stand for 10 minutes.*

Cheesy pepperoni pizza

11 mins

Standing time: none

25cm / 10in cooked pizza base

TOPPING

1 large onion, thinly sliced
396g / 14oz can tomatoes, drained and chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
5ml / 1tsp paprika
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
175g / 6oz Mozzarella cheese, sliced
50g / 2oz stoned black olives
100g / 4oz sliced pepperoni sausage

SERVES 4

1 In a 1.7L / 3pt bowl combine the onion, tomatoes, oregano, paprika, sugar and seasoning to taste. Add the oil, stir well then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir well then microwave, uncovered, for another 6 minutes, stirring twice, until thick.
2 Spread the mixture over the pizza base and cover with cheese. Arrange the olives and sausage slices in concentric circles on top.
3 Place on absorbent paper in cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, turning twice, until hot.

RAY DUNS

Slimmer's notes

As a light lunchtime snack Feta toast-topper is not too calorific at only Cal 205 / kJ 860 per toast round.

Above: *Cheesy Pepperoni Pizza*
Below: *Feta Toast-topper*

RAY DUNS

Feta toast-topper

4½ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz Feta cheese
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
1 small tomato, skinned, seeded and finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp olive oil
4 rounds of crispbake or 4 slices of toast

SERVES 4

1 Place the Feta in a bowl and cover. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 2½-3 minutes or until the cheese is softened; break it up after 2 minutes.
2 Stir in the oregano, tomato and oil and pile the mixture on top of the crispbakes or toast.
3 Arrange in a circle on a plate and microwave for 2-2½ minutes at 30% (Low) or until heated through. Rearrange halfway through.

VARIATION

Fill 2 small, split pitta breads with the mixture and microwave for the same time.

Crock cheese

2¼ mins

Standing time: none

Serve this savoury cheese spread as part of a cheeseboard, or as a tangy sandwich filling.

450 / 1lb Cheddar cheese
100g / 4oz Brie, crust removed
100g / 4oz butter or margarine
1 small onion, finely chopped

MAKES 700g / 1½lb

VARIATIONS

Port crock cheese: add 30ml / 2tbls port, 30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley and a pinch of pepper and garlic powder to the softened cheese and butter.

Red pepper crock cheese: add 15ml / 1tbls chopped red pepper to the softened cheese and butter.

Pepperoni crock cheese: finely chop one Pepperoni stick and add to the softened cheese and butter.

Greek crock cheese: use 50g / 2oz cubed Feta cheese instead of the Brie. Combine with the Cheddar cheese and butter cubes and microwave at 30% (Low) for 2-3 minutes, to soften. Proceed as below. This will give a piquant flavour, but the reduced quantity will prevent it being too salty.

Microtips

Cheese should be served at room temperature to enjoy its flavour to the full. If the cheese has been refrigerated, use the microwave to take the chill off.

Put 225g / 8oz cheese on a plate and microwave at 30% (Low) for between 15 and 45 seconds, depending on the type and firmness of the cheese. Turn the cheese over halfway through and watch carefully to make sure the cheese does not start to melt. Allow to stand for 5 minutes before serving.

How to microwave Crock cheese

Cut *the Cheddar cheese and Brie and 75g / 3oz butter into 2.5cm / 1in cubes. Place in a bowl and microwave at 30% (Low) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until slightly softened. Stir the mixture and rotate the bowl a quarter turn every 30 seconds, and watch carefully to avoid the mixture melting.*

Mash *or process the cheese, butter and onion together until smooth. Melt remaining butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds.*

Stir *in any other flavourings (see variations).*

Pack *the cheese mixture into a 700g / 1½lb mould, serving dish or claypot.*

Pour *the melted butter over the top to seal. Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.*

Savoury pear appetizer

9 mins

Standing time: none

100ml / 4fl oz water
½ small lemon, thinly sliced
sprig of fresh tarragon or a pinch of dried
4 ripe Williams or Packham pears, peeled, halved and cored
watercress or fresh tarragon sprigs to garnish

DRESSING
150g / 5oz Dolcellate cheese, rinds removed, diced
125ml / 4fl oz soured cream or natural yoghurt
pinch of cayenne pepper
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the water, lemon slices and tarragon in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
2 Add the pears to the bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the pears are tender, turning the dish twice. Leave until cold, then chill for 2-3 hours.
3 Place all the dressing ingredients in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1 minute, until well softened. Beat thoroughly until smooth. Transfer to the refrigerator and chill for 2-3 hours.
4 Drain the pears and slice thinly lengthways. Arrange, slightly overlapping, on four individual serving plates.
5 Beat the dressing well, then spoon over the pears. Garnish and serve with granary bread.

Port Salut parcels

6½ mins

Standing time: none

These surprise parcels make an unusual appetizer; or serve them for an al fresco lunch in the summer, with plenty of crusty French bread.

250g / 9oz Port Salut cheese
20-24 vine leaves
1 small onion, thinly sliced
6 tomatoes, thinly sliced
crusty French bread, to serve

SERVES 6

1 Cut off the rind, then cut the cheese into 12mm / ½in cubes.
2 Place the vine leaves in an oblong dish and pour over boiling water to cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, then drain and quickly plunge the leaves into cold water. Dry the vine leaves carefully on absorbent paper and cut off the stems.
3 Place a cube of cheese on each vine leaf and fold in the edges. Roll up the parcels and place seam side down in a shallow 18cm / 7in round dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the parcels are soft to the touch.
4 Arrange the sliced onion and tomato on a serving platter and put the vine parcels on top.

Port Salut Parcels

Orient express

Try a taste of the exotic with these delicious recipes from the Orient. Each one can be cooked in less than 30 minutes in the microwave.

Chinese cooking is usually done by one of two methods. Either the food is cut into small even-sized pieces and stir-fried quickly, or it is cooked slowly in liquid or steam so that it never dries out.

The microwave lends itself to both these methods — cooking vegetables quickly until they are just tender but still have some bite or blending flavours in piquant sauces that use ginger, soy and Chinese five spice powder (see Cook's notes). As well as these spices, the recipes here use Chinese vegetables that are available in cans, such as bamboo shoots and water chestnuts, and beansprouts which can be canned or fresh.

Serve the recipes with rice or noodles, or use them as the basis for a typical Chinese meal. This includes soup and rice and several small savoury dishes — all served in bowls for people to help themselves. Use the microwave for an authentic Chinese meal.

Stir-fried chicken

19 mins

Standing time: none

250g / 8.82oz packet frozen broccoli spears
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 bunch spring onions, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
450g / 1lb boneless chicken breast meat, cut into strips
45ml / 3tbls water
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced

SERVES 4

1 Place frozen broccoli in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until just tender.

2 Pre-heat a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add oil, spring onions, garlic and chicken and stir until sizzling stops. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until no longer pink.
3 Blend together water, soy sauce, cornflour and stock cube in a small jug. Pour over chicken and stir. Add broccoli and mushrooms.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until thickened, stirring three times.

Oriental tuna and noodles

11 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz carrots, cut into matchsticks
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
½ red pepper, seeded and chopped
220g / 7¾oz can pineapple chunks, drained, juice reserved
230g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp Chinese five spice powder
185g / 7oz can tuna, drained and flaked
85g / 3oz can chow mein noodles

SERVES 4

1 Place carrots, onion, garlic and green and red peppers in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.
2 Stir in pineapple and water chestnuts. Blend together pineapple juice, soy sauce, brown sugar and Chinese five spice powder. Pour over vegetables.
3 Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Stir twice.
4 Stir in tuna. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until hot. Sprinkle with noodles.

Crispy seafood casserole

11½ mins

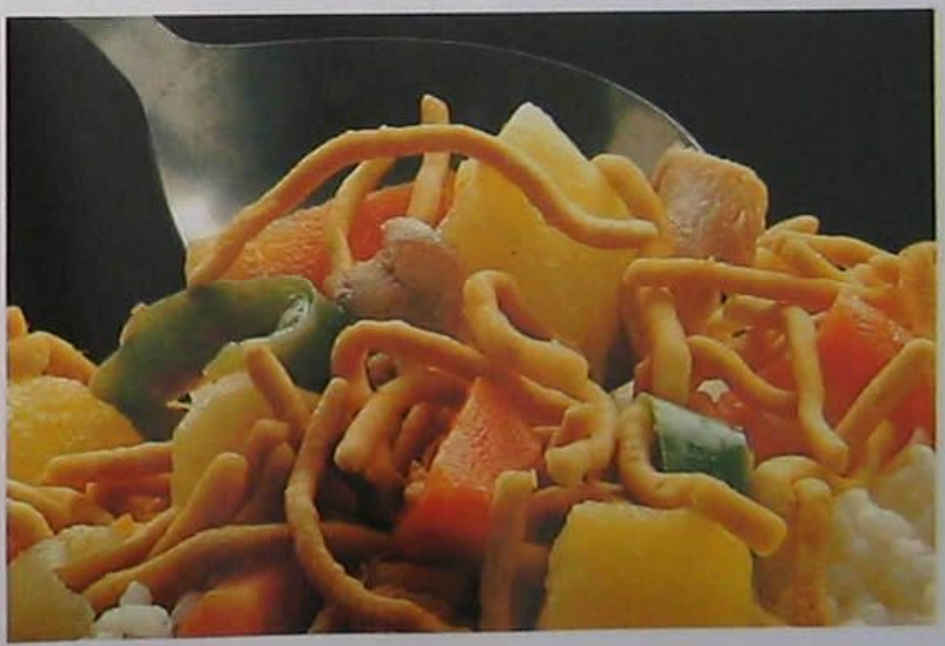
Standing time: none

15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
pinch of mustard powder
125ml / 4fl oz milk
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
185g / 7oz can tuna, drained
200g / 7oz can shrimps, drained
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz mushrooms, chopped
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and sliced
85g / 3oz can chow mein noodles

SERVES 4

1 Place butter in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds to melt.
2 Blend in flour and mustard. Stir in milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until thickened, stirring every minute.
3 Stir in cheese, tuna and shrimps. Season to taste.
4 Place vegetables in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until tender. Stir into cheese and tuna.
5 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until hot. Stir in noodles. Serve with rice.

Above: *Crispy Seafood Casserole*
Below: *Oriental Tuna and Noodles*



Hot and sour soup

21 mins

Standing time: none

Vinegar gives this tasty soup an added pungence.

1 chicken quarter, weighing about 275g / 10oz
700ml / 1¼pt hot water
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
5ml / 1tsp white pepper
30ml / 2tbls white wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp sesame or vegetable oil
2 spring onions, sliced diagonally
salt to taste
2 eggs, lightly beaten

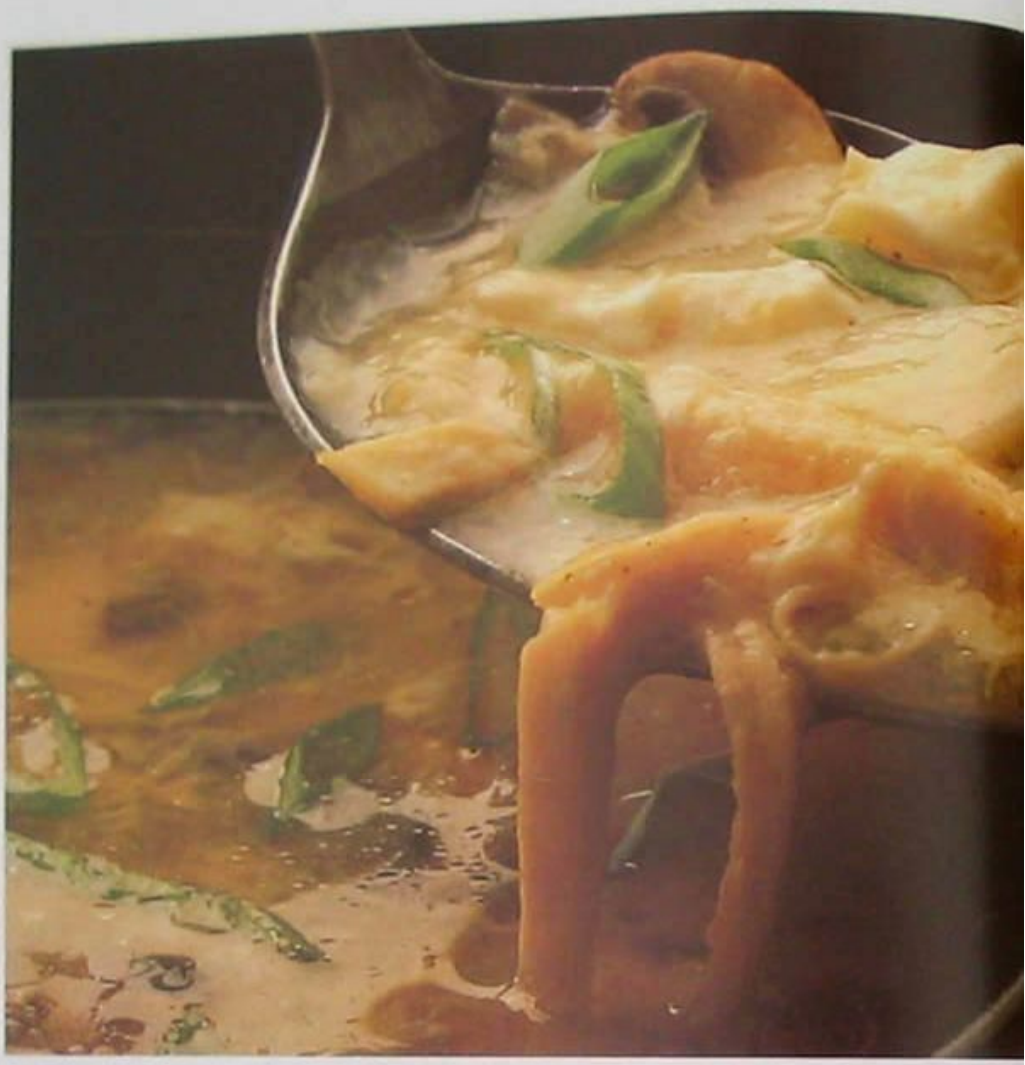
SERVES 4

1 Place chicken, water, carrots, and celery in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink.
2 Using a slotted spoon, remove chicken and vegetables, reserving broth. Skin chicken and cut into strips. Discard the vegetables.
3 Add chicken meat and mushrooms to broth, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until boiling.
4 Blend together cornflour, pepper, vinegar, soy sauce and oil. Stir into broth together with spring onions. Add salt to taste.
5 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring once.
6 Pour egg in a thin stream into the soup, stirring in a circular motion. Serve immediately.

Hot and Sour Soup

Microtips

To save time, make Hot and Sour Soup using 700ml / 1¼pt hot chicken stock made with a stock cube. Omit the carrots and celery and use 275g / 10oz leftover cooked chicken meat, skinned and cut into strips. Proceed from stage 3.



Turkey and mange tout

21 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz mange tout peas
450g / 1lb boneless turkey breast
125ml / 4fl oz water
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
25g / 1oz slivered almonds

SERVES 4

1 Place mange tout peas in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes or until just tender.
2 Slice breast lengthways into four 6mm / ¼in thick slices; flatten slightly, with a rolling pin. Place in a single layer in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes or until no longer pink, rearranging slices twice. Remove turkey to serving dish and keep warm.
3 In small bowl, blend together water, cornflour, brown sugar, soy sauce and stock cube. Pour into casserole and stir in mushrooms.
4 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6 minutes or until sauce is thickened and mushrooms are just tender.
5 Stir in mange tout peas and almonds. Arrange turkey on top, turning it to coat with sauce. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes or until heated through. Serve with rice.

Cook's notes

Chinese five spice powder is a combination of spices used in Chinese cooking. It is made up of cinnamon, cloves, fennel, star anise and Szechuan pepper. It may be omitted, but it adds an authentic oriental flavour.

Canned chow mein noodles are dry and crispy, and ready to serve.

Chinese chicken

19 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb boneless chicken breast, skinned and cut into thin strips
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
230g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
227g / 8oz can sliced bamboo shoots, drained
100g / 4oz beansprouts, rinsed, or soaked in cold water for 10 minutes, and drained
2 celery stalks, chopped
4 spring onions, sliced
175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 1tbls dry sherry
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place chicken and soy sauce in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink, stirring twice.
2 Add water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, beansprouts, celery, spring onions and mushrooms.
3 Blend together cornflour, water and sherry until smooth. Pour over chicken and vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, or until the vegetables are just tender and the chicken is cooked through, stirring four times during cooking. Season to taste. Serve with rice.

Crabmeat canoes

15 mins

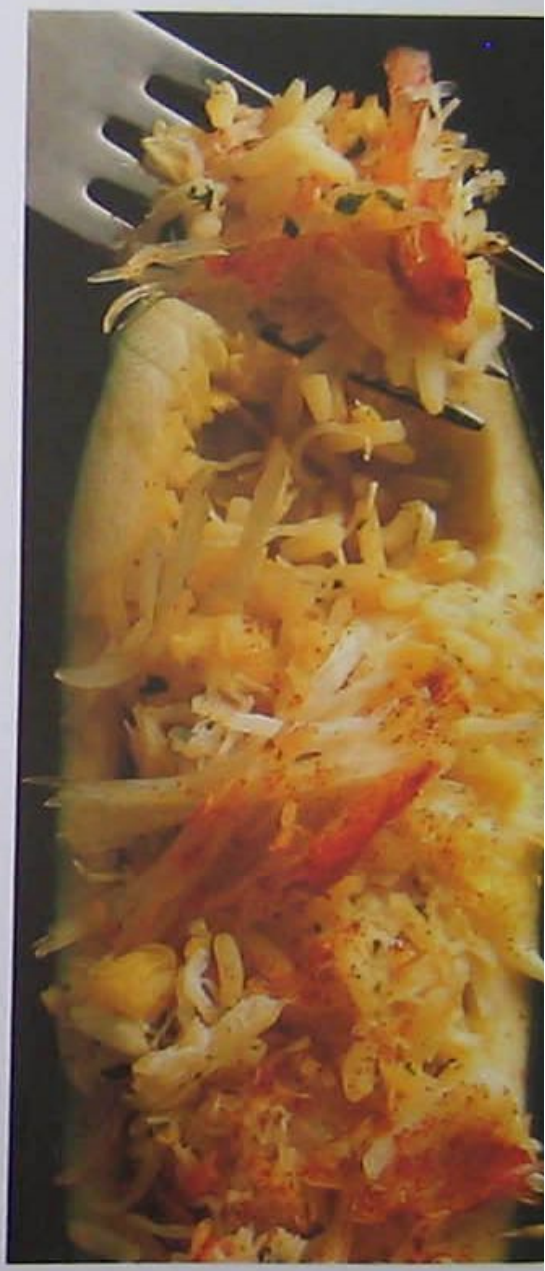
Standing time: none

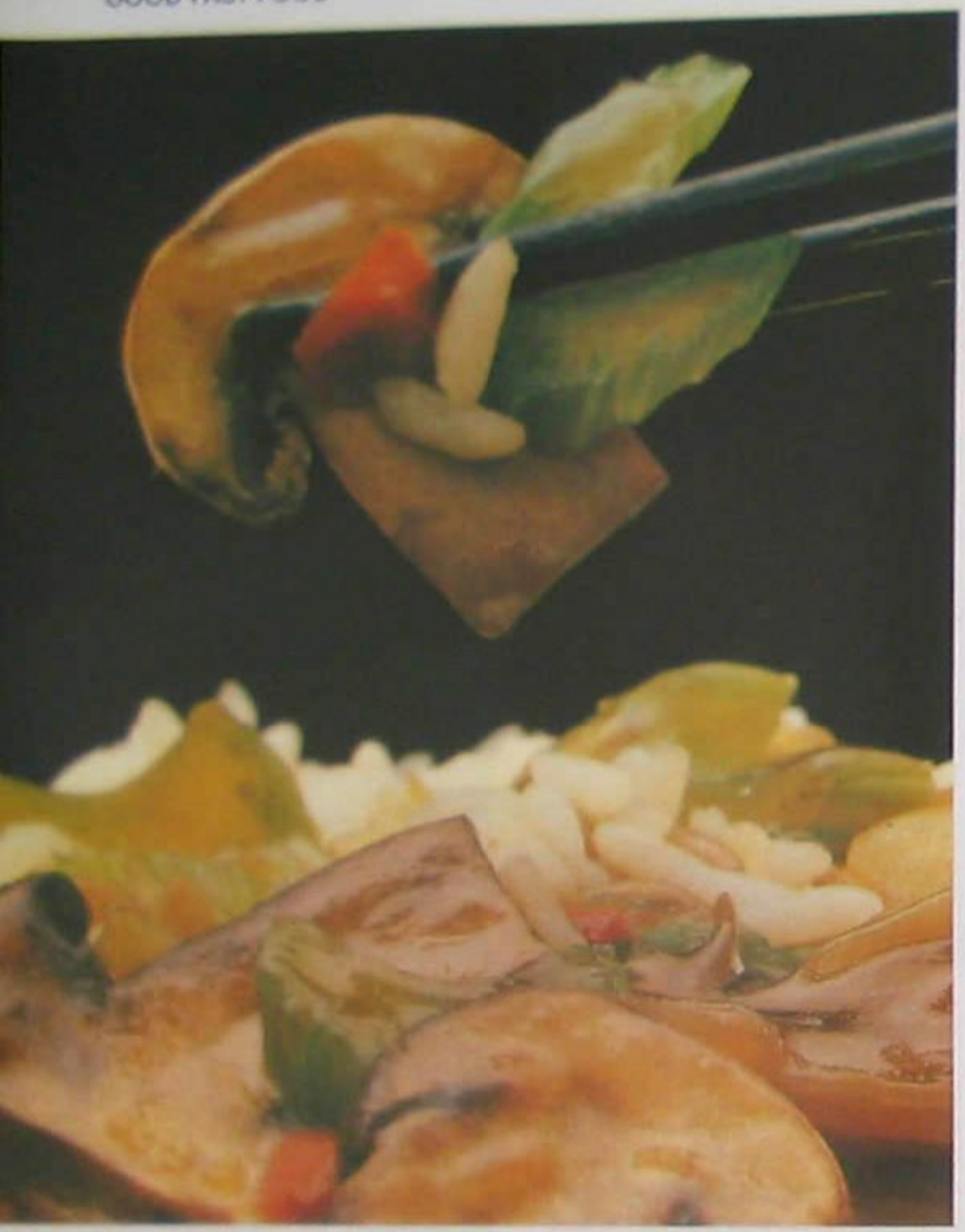
2 large courgettes, halved lengthways
50g / 2oz long grain rice
125ml / 4fl oz hot chicken stock
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
170g / 6oz can crabmeat, drained
pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika

SERVES 4

1 Scoop out the centre pulp from courgette halves, leaving a 6-12mm / ¼-½in shell. Chop pulp and mix with rice, stock, lemon juice, soy sauce and parsley in a small bowl.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until the rice is tender and stock absorbed.
3 Stir in crabmeat and seasoning to taste. Spoon filling into courgettes, sprinkle with paprika.
4 Arrange courgette halves in a large baking dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes or until shells are tender, rearranging once.

Left: *Chinese Chicken*
Below: *Crabmeat Canoes*





Sweet 'n' sour ribs

27 mins

Standing time: none

900g / 2lb pork spare ribs
pepper
125ml / 4fl oz orange juice
75ml / 5tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
1 onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls cider vinegar
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
salt

SERVES 4

1 Arrange spare ribs in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Sprinkle with pepper and pour over half the orange juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12 minutes, or until the ribs are no longer pink, rearranging them three times.
2 Mix remaining orange juice with the tomato ketchup, onion, garlic, sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce and cornflour. Add some salt and pour over the ribs.
3 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave, uncovered, for 10 minutes.
4 Rearrange the ribs and turn them over. Coat with sauce, then microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until the ribs are cooked.

Quick chop suey

15 mins

Standing time: none

3 celery stalks, sliced
1 onion, chopped
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
12mm / ½in piece root ginger, peeled and grated
25g / 1oz butter
75ml / 3fl oz water
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
227g / 8oz can bamboo shoots, drained
280g / 8oz can beansprouts, drained (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Place celery, onion, mushrooms, pepper, ginger and butter in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, or until just tender, stirring twice during cooking.
2 Blend together water, soy sauce, tomato purée or paste, vinegar and cornflour in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until thickened, stirring three times.
3 Mix this sauce into the vegetable mixture together with the bamboo shoots and beansprouts, if used. Cover and microwave 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until heated through, stirring twice during cooking.
4 Serve with rice or noodles.

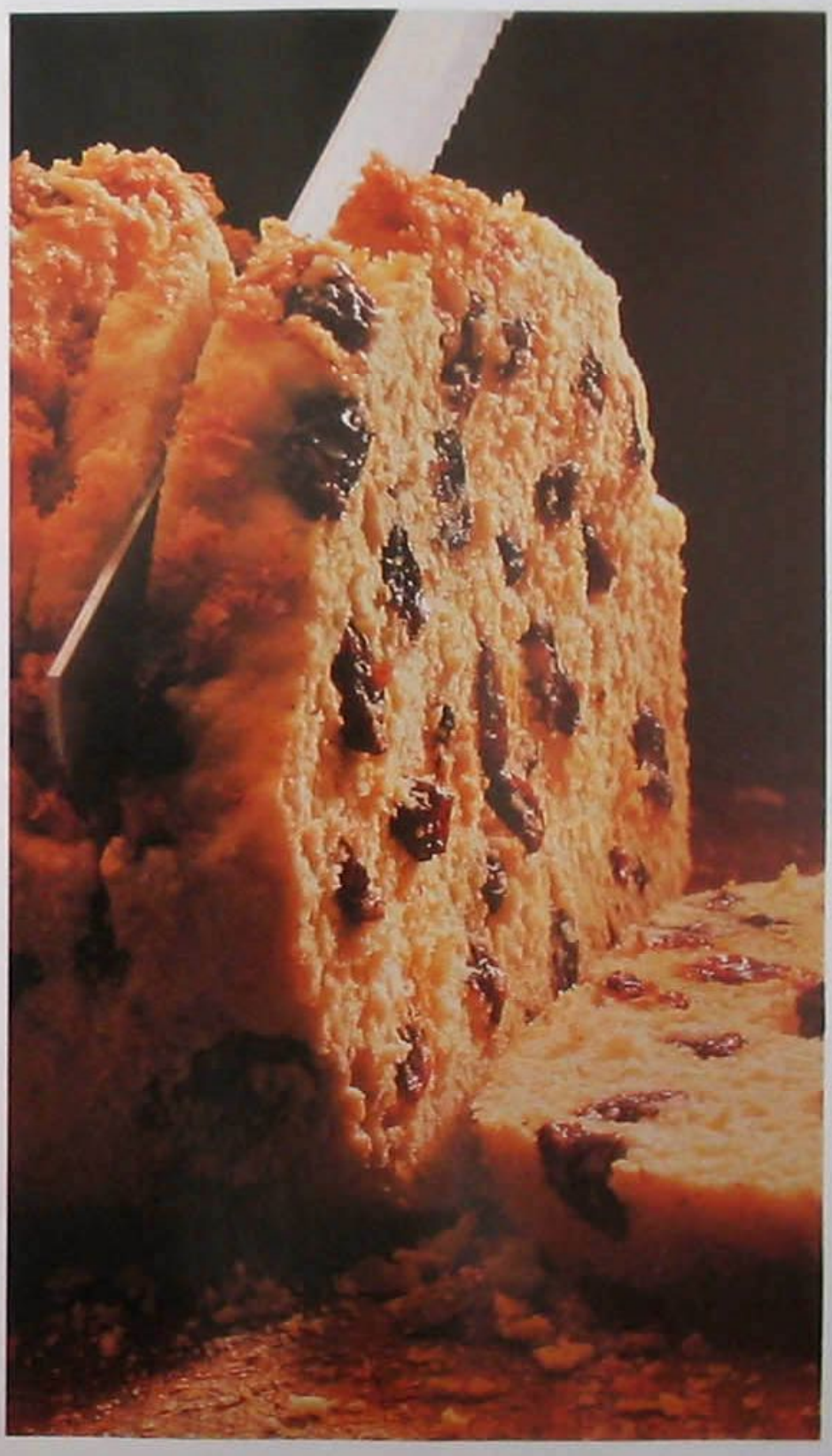
Quick Chop Suey

Cook's notes

You could use fresh beansprouts (available from many supermarkets) for this recipe if you like. They add a crunchy texture that canned bean sprouts lack. Soak them in cold water for 10 minutes and drain well before adding to the mixture as outlined above. The soaking is necessary to get rid of an enzyme that sticks to them.

Quick breads

These tempting breads are quick to make, microwave-style, and so good to eat that they'll disappear just as quickly! Serve the savoury types with soup or salads and the sweet ones as a tea- or coffee-time treat.



Soda Bread

These tasty breads can be ready in 20 minutes or less, from start to finish. For those with a sweet tooth, the Soda Bread or Chewy Wheat Loaf, sliced and spread with butter, curd cheese or jam, make a delicious and nourishing treat — great for after school or at bedtime.

It helps to use transparent cookware when making these breads; then you can easily check whether the mixture is cooked by looking through the base of the dish. It is ready when no unbaked batter appears in the centre. If it still looks a little runny, return it to the microwave for a further 1-2 minutes. Always check early, to avoid overcooking.

Soda bread

10¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls wholewheat breadcrumbs
225g / 8oz plain flour
150g / 5oz raisins
15ml / 1tbls granulated sugar
10ml / 2tsp bicarbonate of soda
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
60ml / 4tbls soured cream
60ml / 4tbls milk
1 egg, beaten

TOPPING
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls wholewheat breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls rolled oats
15ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon

MAKES 1 LOAF

1 Lightly grease a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl and coat with breadcrumbs. Combine the flour, raisins, sugar, bicarbonate of soda and salt.

2 Melt butter in a bowl at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir butter, soured cream, milk and egg into flour mixture. Spoon into prepared, crumb-lined bowl.
3 Make topping: melt butter in a small bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in other topping ingredients and spread over top of loaf.
4 Cut a 2.5cm / 1in deep cross on top of bread and place on an inverted plate in cooker. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 10-12 minutes, turning twice, until top is springy to the touch.
5 Let stand for 5 minutes. Turn out and serve hot or cold.

Sausage corn bread

13½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

450g / 1lb pork sausagemeat
100g / 4oz plain flour
75g / 3oz cornmeal
15ml / 1tbls granulated sugar
15ml / 3tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
2 eggs, beaten
15ml / 1tbls Dijon mustard
125ml / 4fl oz milk
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil

SERVES 6

How to microwave Sausage Corn Bread

Crumble *the sausagemeat over the base of a 23cm / 9in round baking dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-7 minutes, stirring once after half the time. Drain off fat. Spoon half the sausagemeat into another dish and place on one side.*

Mix *the remaining ingredients together. Pour the mixture over the sausagemeat in the baking dish, then crumble the reserved meat on top. Put dish on inverted plate in microwave and cook for 6 minutes at 50% (Medium), turning dish twice.*

Increase *power to 100% (High) and cook for 3-5 minutes, giving dish a half-turn after 2 minutes. Check that mixture is cooked through by looking through base of dish — the batter should appear cooked. Leave to stand for 10 minutes, then serve warm.*

Savoury cheese bread

9 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

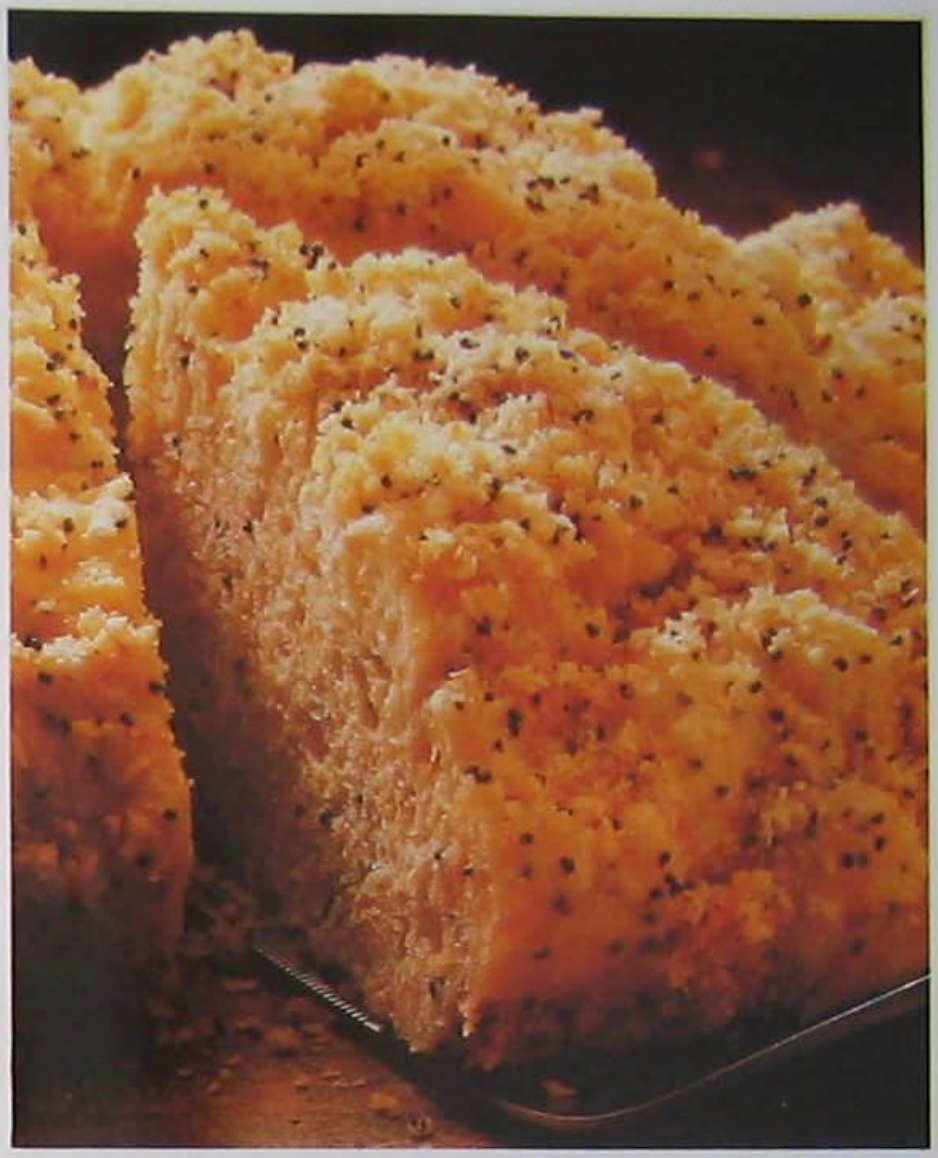
225g / 8oz plain flour
15ml / 1tbls grated onion
10ml / 2tsp poppy seeds
10ml / 2tsp granulated sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
65g / 2½oz butter or margarine
120ml / 8tbls buttermilk or soured milk (see Cook's Notes)
1 egg, lightly beaten

TOPPING
5ml / 1tsp butter, melted
30ml / 2tbls dry breadcrumbs
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
5ml / 1tsp poppy seeds

SERVES 6-8

Cook's notes

If you are unable to buy buttermilk, use fresh soured milk instead. To make it, add 30ml / 2tbls lemon juice or distilled malt vinegar to 120ml / 8tbls fresh milk.



How to microwave Savoury cheese bread

Combine *the flour, grated onion, poppy seeds, sugar, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, salt and grated cheese together in a bowl. Cut the butter in pieces and add. Mix with fingertips or a mixer until finely blended. Stir in buttermilk and egg and mix well.*

Lightly *grease a 25cm / 10in pie dish or round baking dish and line the base with greaseproof paper or clingfilm. Shape the mixture into a round and place in the dish. Mix the topping ingredients and sprinkle on top. Make deep criss-cross cuts across the top.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish one half turn. Increase power to 100% (High) and cook for 3-5 minutes or until firm in centre, giving the dish one half turn. Let stand for 10 minutes. Serve hot or cold, cut in wedges or slices.*

Chewy wheat loaf

6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
125ml / 4fl oz milk
150g / 5oz wholewheat flour
25g / 1oz soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
60ml / 4tbls vegetable oil
2 eggs, lightly beaten
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon

MAKES 12 SLICES

1 Stir the lemon juice into the milk. Put all the remaining ingredients into a large bowl and stir in the milk mixture. Beat well for 1 minute.

2 Line the base of a 21 × 12.5cm / 8½ × 5in transparent loaf dish with greaseproof paper or clingfilm. Spoon in the mixture.

3 Shield the ends of the loaf with strips of smooth foil (see Five-Grain Quick Bread, opposite).

4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes, turning the dish twice. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-2 minutes, until the top of bread is firm to the touch and almost dry, but a little moisture is visible.

5 Check that there is no uncooked batter showing through the bottom of the dish.

6 Let stand for 3 minutes. Turn bread out of dish and remove the paper or clingfilm. Serve hot or cold, sliced and spread with jam, if liked.

Chewy Wheat Loaf

Spoon bread

8 mins

Standing time: none

125ml / 4floz skimmed milk
125ml / 4fl oz water
40g / 1½oz cornmeal
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
1 egg, separated and 1 extra egg white

SERVES 8

1 Combine the milk and water in a jug. In a small bowl, mix three-quarters of this with the cornmeal and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until very thick. Whisk 2 or 3 times during cooking.
2 Blend in the rest of the milk mixture with the butter, baking powder, salt and egg yolk.
3 In another bowl, whisk the 2 egg whites until soft peaks form. Fold the egg whites into the cornmeal mixture, using a metal spoon, and pour into a 23cm / 9in round cake dish.
4 Microwave the bread at 50% (Medium) for 6-9 minutes, until centre sets, turning dish 3 times. Serve hot.

Microtips

To reheat Savoury Cheese Bread, place one-quarter of the loaf at a time on double thickness absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds.

Five-grain quick bread

9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz plain flour
50g / 2oz wholewheat flour
40g / 1½oz bran flakes, crushed finely
40g / 1½oz rolled oats
30ml / 2tbls wheatgerm
25g / 1oz cornmeal
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
45ml / 3tbls soft dark brown sugar
150ml / ¼pt skimmed milk
2 eggs
2.5ml / ½tsp salt

MAKES 12 SLICES

1 Blend all the ingredients together in a bowl. Line the base of a 21 × 12.5cm / 8½ × 5in loaf dish with greaseproof paper or cling film. Spoon in the mixture.
2 Shield the ends of loaf with 6.5cm / 2½in strips of smooth foil, covering mixture with 4cm / 1½in and moulding the remaining foil around the edges of the dish.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 9-11 minutes, or until the bread is cooked (see steps 4 and 5), giving the dish a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes.
4 To test whether the bread is cooked, lightly press the centre — it should spring back if it is fully cooked.
5 As another test, look at the bottom of the glass baking dish to check that there is no unbaked batter still remaining in the centre.
6 Let stand for 5 minutes. Turn bread out of the dish and remove the paper or clingfilm. Serve hot or cold the same day.

Above left: *Spoon Bread*
Below: *Five-grain Quick Bread*

Microwaving fruit starters

Light and bright, fresh and tangy — fruit is so versatile it makes a wonderful opener to a meal. Whet the palate with these stunning starters, produced in moments in the microwave.

The delicious tangy taste of fruit makes it a perfect partner for all sorts of flavours and textures, giving endless opportunities for delightful and unusual dishes.

The microwave is ideal for cooking fruit. Not only does it retain the colour, flavour and shape, but because so little liquid is needed in the cooking, all the natural goodness stays in the fruit, too. Always give the minimum of cooking time in the first instance, to avoid overcooking and spoiling the fruit.

Types of fruit

Use fresh fruit whenever you can, as it contains plenty of natural vitamins. Frozen or canned fruits, however, can be used in the microwave to give equally successful results and, in fact, often provide richer colours. Look for fruit canned in natural juice rather than syrup, as this will be less sweet and thus more suitable for savoury dishes.

Fruity ideas

Let these dishes spark off other ideas for fun fruity starters. Combine different fruits as in the Hot Fruit Medley to give a variety of colours and textures as well as flavours. Remember that soft cheeses and fish complement fruit well, and that yoghurt and soured cream can be used to give an irresistibly creamy texture to fruity soups and sauces.

The flavourings you use are very important for complementing and enhancing the fruit. Ginger, for example, is a well-tried partner to melon, but other spices — cinnamon and nutmeg, for instance — can bring out the flavour of pears or give added zest to a fruit soup.

Dressing up

Reduce the sweetness in fruit with a herbed or spicy vinaigrette. Flavour the dressing with fresh herbs, if possible, and use unusual vinegars, such as cider or raspberry, for a change. Top dishes with whole or chopped nuts, and decorate with whole celery, mint, radicchio or lettuce leaves for quick and effective garnishes.

Hot fruit medley

2 mins

Standing time: none

312g / 11oz can mandarin orange segments in natural juice, drained
2 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced
350g / 12oz strawberries, hulled and sliced
45ml / 3tbls unsweetened tropical or exotic fruit juice

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until the fruit is hot, stirring twice. Arrange on serving plates and serve immediately.

VARIATION

Add 2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon to the fruit mixture for a slightly spicy taste.

Cook's notes

Do not overcook the fruit — it should be just heated — or the kiwi fruit and strawberries turn flabby and lose their fresh colours.

Vermouth Orange and Grapefruit

Vermouth orange and grapefruit

7 mins

Standing time: none

Vermouth has a subtle herby flavour which combines well with the fruits in this unusual starter.

2 large grapefruit
4 small oranges
45ml / 3tbls dry vermouth
45ml / 3tbls Demerara sugar
mint leaves, to garnish (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Cut away the skin and pith from the grapefruit and oranges. Place a sieve over a bowl, then cut out the segments of the fruit, dropping them into the sieve and draining the juices into the bowl. Squeeze the remaining membranes, before discarding.

2 Arrange the fruits overlapping alternately in four individual, microwave-proof serving dishes.

3 Add the vermouth and sugar to the fruit juices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until slightly syrupy and reduced.

4 Pour the hot syrup over the fruits and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until heated through, rotating the dishes a quarter turn twice. Garnish with mint leaves, if liked, and serve immediately or let cool.

VARIATIONS

Substitute water and a dash of bitters for vermouth, if preferred. For another combination of fruits, try pink-fleshed grapefruit with satsumas or tangerines.

Cheesy pear salad

5½ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz soft light brown sugar
822g / 1lb 13oz can pear halves, drained and 60ml / 4tbls juice reserved
30ml / 2tbls vinegar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cloves
60ml / 4tbls dry sherry
200g / 7oz cream cheese
75-85g / 3-3½oz walnuts or pecans, chopped
8 lettuce leaves, to garnish

SERVES 8

1 In a 2L / 3½pt bowl, mix the sugar, reserved pear juice, vinegar and spices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until boiling, stirring once. Stir in the sherry.

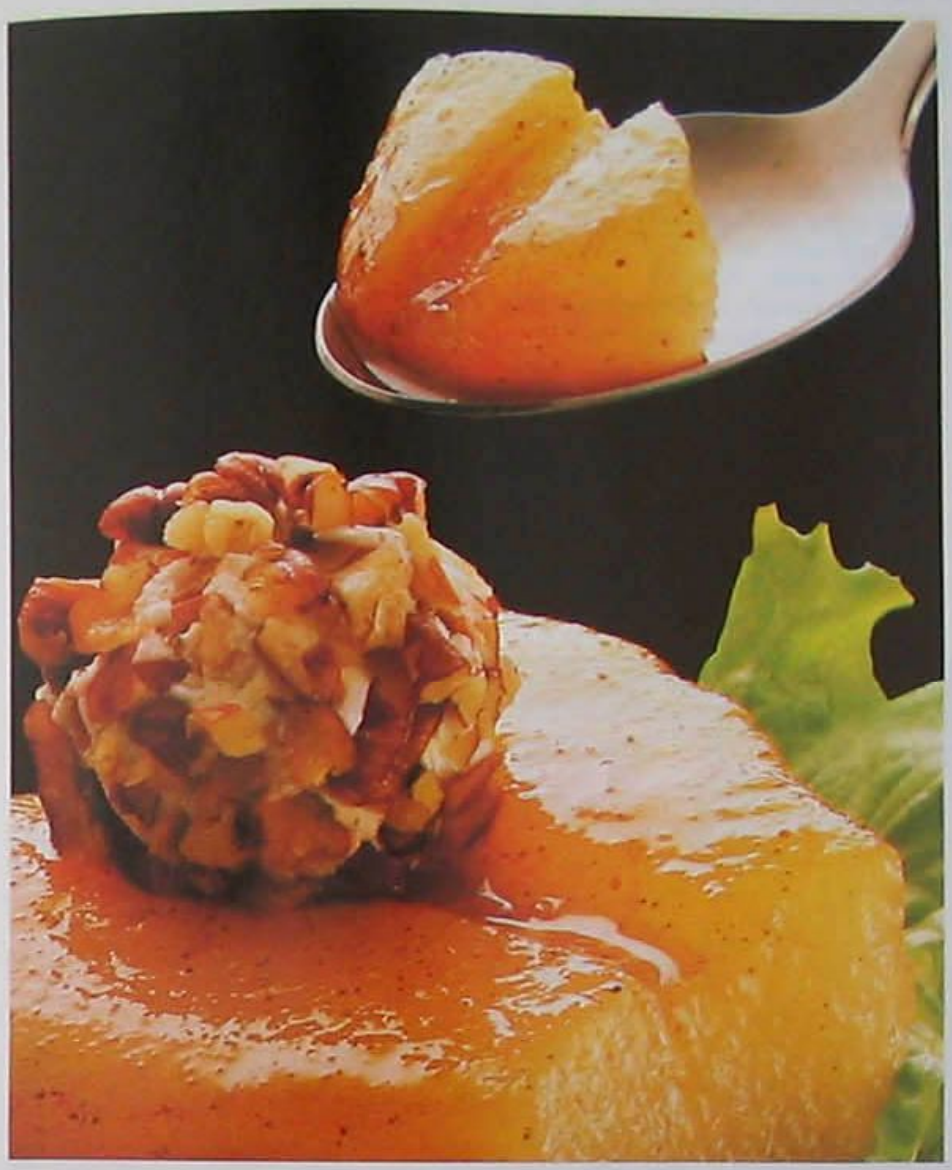
2 Add the pear halves, carefully stirring to coat with the spicy syrup. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until heated. Cool, then chill.

3 Divide the cream cheese into eight, and shape each piece into a ball. Roll the balls, in the nuts until completely coated.

4 To serve, place the lettuce leaves on eight salad or side plates and top with a pear half, cut-side up. Sprinkle a little of the sauce over each and place a cheese ball in the hollow of each pear half. Serve immediately with slices of buttered wholewheat bread, or melba toast.

Slimmer's notes

Fruity starters make good slimline recipes. For example, by just reducing the sugar to 30ml / 2tbls, the Vermouth Orange and Grapefruit makes a refreshing starter at 95Cal / 400kJ per serving. If you cannot obtain an exotic or tropical juice without added sugar for the Hot Fruit Medley, use an unsweetened fruit juice such as pineapple. This gives a light starter with just 65Cal / 275kJ.



3 Halve eight of the drained cherries and put on one side. Add the remainder, whole, to the liquid in the bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, or until slightly thickened, stirring twice.
4 Liquidize or sieve the mixture and leave to cool. Add the reserved halved cherries and chill.
5 When ready to serve, divide between four soup bowls and swirl in the soured cream or yoghurt.

VARIATIONS
Use 350g / 12oz frozen cherries, or 450g / 1lb fresh cherries, pitted, if preferred. Combine with 150ml / ¼pt boiling water and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, stirring twice. Drain off the juice and continue as directed in stage 2, above.

Cook's notes

The colour of this soup varies according to the colour of the cherries used. For a richer colour, use the black variety. Both stoned black or red cherries are available in cans.

Left: *Cheesy Pear Salad*
Below: *Spicy Cherry Soup*

Spicy cherry soup

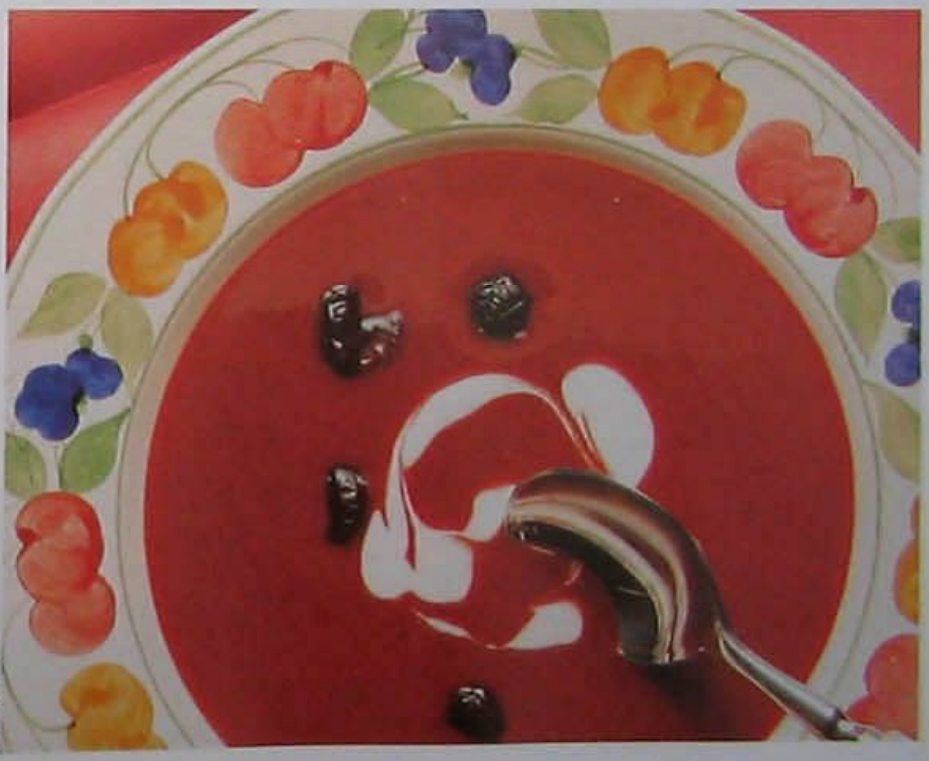
8 mins

Standing time: none

454g / 16oz can stoned cherries in natural juice
200ml / 7fl oz orange juice
15ml / 3tsp arrowroot
large pinch of grated nutmeg
15ml / 1tbls light brown sugar
150ml / ¼pt soured cream or natural yoghurt

SERVES 4

1 Drain the cherries and add the orange juice to the liquid. Add sufficient water to make up to 425ml / ¾pt.
2 Blend the arrowroot, nutmeg and sugar with 45ml / 3tbls of the liquid. Stir into the remainder and pour into a bowl.



RAY DUNS

Gingered melon and prawns

10 mins

Standing time: none

1 large cantaloupe melon
175-225g / 6-8oz prawns
25g / 1oz flaked almonds

SAUCE
60ml / 4tbls olive oil
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
finely grated zest of ¼ lemon
6.5ml / 1¼tsp ground ginger
25g / 1oz glacé cooking ginger, chopped
salt

SERVES 4

1 Using a melon baller or teaspoon, scoop out the melon flesh. Discard seeds.
2 If using frozen prawns, spread them out in a single layer on absorbent paper in a dish. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 9-11 minutes, or until just thawed, stirring twice. Spread out on a double layer of absorbent paper to drain thoroughly.
3 For the sauce: put the oil, lemon juice and zest, ground ginger, chopped glacé ginger and salt into a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until bubbling and hot.
4 Stir the melon balls, prawns and almonds into the hot sauce. Divide between four serving dishes. Serve warm or cold, garnished with watercress sprigs, if liked.

VARIATIONS
For a special occasion, use small Ogen melons and serve the mixture in the scooped out shells.

Cook's notes

Cantaloupe melons have sweet, fragrant flesh and rough, netted skin with clearly defined ribs. They include the small Charentais and Ogen melons.

Glacé cooking ginger is sold in pieces in packets, and is less expensive that whole glacé ginger.

RAY DUNN

Fresh beef mince

Minced beef must be the most versatile meat available. It has any number of uses, is popular with the whole family and cooks beautifully in the microwave.

One of the great advantages of mince is that you can make use of economical cuts of beef that would be tough without long, slow cooking. Mincing breaks down tough tissue in the beef and makes the meat easy to chew.

Any cut of beef can be minced, and some butchers will mince meat fresh on request. You can also make mince yourself, with the advantage that you can trim away fat and make it coarse or fine.

A food processor works by chopping, rather than stretching the meat, so the mince is particularly tender. Cut the meat into rough chunks and make coarse mince for shepherds pie and lasagne. Fine mince is better for stuffed vegetables or beefburgers. To make fine mince, put it through the mincer twice. With a food processor, the longer it is processed, the finer the mince. Use mince quickly when it is fresh, as it deteriorates quickly.

Individual Cottage Pies

Individual cottage pies

45 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

25g / 1oz butter
1 large onion, chopped
450g / 1lb lean braising steak, coarsely minced
1 small celery stalk, chopped
100g / 4oz carrots, grated
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
15ml / 1tbls herb purée or chopped fresh herbs

RAY DUNS

10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
10ml / 2tsp French mustard
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper to taste
125ml / 4fl oz water
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced

TOPPING
900g / 1½lb potatoes, cut into small even pieces
40g / 1½oz butter
30ml / 2tbls creamy milk

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter and onions in a large casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until the onion is soft.
2 Add meat and stir well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once.
3 Add celery, carrots, tomato and herb purée, soy sauce, mustard, parsley, seasoning and water. Stir well, breaking up the meat. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 18-20 minutes, stirring two or three times.
4 Add mushrooms and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until mushrooms are soft. Set aside.
5 Place the potatoes in a large bowl or casserole. Add 125ml / 4fl oz water, cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, or until potatoes are tender, stirring once.
6 Drain potatoes and add 25g / 1oz butter and milk. Divide mince into four 275ml / ½pt capacity ovenproof dishes and spoon potato on top. Smooth with a fork. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until heated through. Dot with remaining butter and stand for 5 minutes. Swirl melted butter through potato with a fork and brown under the grill.

VARIATION
Make one large cottage pie in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Heat through at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.

Meaty spaghetti

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz spaghetti
grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

SAUCE
450g / 1lb lean chuck or stewing steak, minced
500g / 18fl oz carton creamed tomatoes or sieved, canned tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls vegetable purée
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place mince, creamed tomato, vegetable purée, oregano, sugar and seasoning in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole and mix well.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir well. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 18-20 minutes, stirring and breaking up meat.
3 Stand for 5 minutes. Serve with spaghetti, and Parmesan cheese.

How to mince beef

Place *meat on a cutting board and trim away any excess fat or gristle. Cut the meat into even-sized pieces to use in a food processor or mincer.*

Put *350-450g / ¾-1lb (or according to processor instructions) of beef cubes into processor bowl. Process in short bursts until meat is minced.*

Feed *meat cubes into the top of the mincer a few at a time and mince meat. If a finer texture is required put meat through the mincer again.*

Steak patties with mushrooms

12 min

Standing time: none

Top quality steak can be microwaved as rare or well done as you like, and still be deliciously tender. For a very tender 'steak', process or mince meat finely.

450g / 1lb lean rump steak, finely minced
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper

GARNISH
1 spring onion, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls dry sherry
225g / 8oz mushrooms, halved
15g / ½oz butter

SERVES 4

1 Mix minced steak with garlic. Season; form into four patties.

2 Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Place patties on to browning dish, pressing down well. Turn over, to brown other side, then microwave at 100% (High) for 2-5 minutes, according to doneness required, turning them once.

3 Arrange on a serving dish and keep warm. Make the mushroom garnish. Place onion, sherry, mushrooms and butter in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir to coat mushrooms with butter and microwave for a further 4-6 minutes, or until the mushrooms are tender, stirring once.

4 Serve with mushrooms and a baked jacket potato and salad.

Steak patties with mushrooms for two: halve the ingredients and form into two patties. Microwave for 1½-3 minutes, or to doneness required. Microwave mushrooms for 3-5 minutes.

Left: *Meaty Spaghetti*
Below: *Steak Patties with Mushrooms*

Cabbage rolls

12 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 white cabbage leaves (see Microtips)
60ml / 4tbls water

FILLING
350g / ¾lb lean braising or chuck steak, finely minced
1 small onion, finely chopped
½ small chopped green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
10ml / 2tsp French mustard
5ml / 1tsp creamed horseradish sauce
salt and pepper

SAUCE
150ml / ¼pt tomato juice
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil

SERVES 4

1 Remove stem of each cabbage leaf by cutting a neat 'V'. Arrange leaves in a large baking dish. Add water, cover with stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until tender and pliable, rearranging once.
2 Mix the meat, onion, pepper, soy sauce, mustard, horseradish and seasoning thoroughly. Place one-eighth of the meat mixture on the base of each cabbage leaf. Fold in sides and roll up.
3 Place rolls, seam side down, in a buttered baking dish. Combine the tomato juice and basil and pour over rolls.
4 Cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-12 minutes or until meat is cooked and no longer pink. Rearrange rolls and turn dish twice during cooking, and baste with sauce.
5 Stand for 5 minutes then serve with creamed potatoes.

Microtips

To separate leaves from whole cabbage, first remove broken or discoloured leaves. Make deep cuts around the base of the cabbage. Place in a large dish, stalk end down, with 60ml / 4tbls water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes or until outer leaves separate easily. Remove four or five leaves. Microwave 3-4 minutes more to use inner leaves.

Left: *Cabbage Rolls*
Below: *Indonesian Beefburgers*

Indonesian beefburgers

11 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
2 small onions, finely chopped
2 slices fresh bread, crusts removed
450g / 1lb lean braising steak, minced
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
15ml / 1tbls peanut butter
salt and black pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place oil and half the chopped onions in a shallow casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until onions begin to brown, stirring once.
2 Soak bread in a little water, then squeeze out and place in mixing bowl with meat, all the onions, tomato purée, peanut butter and seasoning. Mix thoroughly.
3 Form meat into four large or eight small burgers and arrange on a plate. Microwave uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8-13 minutes; turn over and rearrange the burgers twice during cooking, until meat is tender and no longer pink. Stand for 3 minutes.
4 Serve with Brussels sprouts.

DAVE KING

De luxe lasagne

41 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

6 rashers streaky bacon, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
450g / 1lb lean stewing or braising steak, minced
200g / 7oz can tomatoes
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
pinch of dried thyme
½ chicken stock cube
175g / 6oz lasagne, cooked conventionally
grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

SAUCE
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45g / 3tbs plain flour
425ml / ¾pt milk
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
pinch of grated nutmeg
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Place bacon, onion and garlic in a large casserole and microwave, covered, for 3-4 minutes until bacon is cooked. Add minced beef and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring and breaking up meat once during cooking.
2 Add tomatoes, oregano, thyme and stock cube. Stir well then cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes, stirring twice.
3 Set meat aside while making sauce. Melt butter at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Stir in flour and milk, then microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, until sauce is thick and bubbly; stir briskly two or three times.
4 Add cheese and nutmeg and microwave for 30 seconds.
5 Spread a little sauce over the bottom of a shallow dish. Lay one layer of lasagne on top, then spread with a little more cheese sauce and a generous helping of meat sauce. Continue making layers in this way, ending with a layer of pasta and one of sauce.
6 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 18-20 minutes or until centre is hot and top is bubbly, turning two or three times during cooking. Stand for 10 minutes.

Deluxe Lasagne

Summer house party

What better way to entertain friends in the summer than with a delightfully informal house party? Prepare these dishes in advance and serve them indoors or out — as the weather allows!

Get the party off to a sparkling start with the tinglingly fresh fruit cup served in pretty, frosted glasses. We have served it in a 'watermelon bowl', which is easy to make and is a marvellous centrepiece, but the punch would look equally attractive in a pretty glass bowl. If you want to turn it into an alcoholic punch, incidentally, simply substitute sparkling white wine for the carbonated water. Pass round the spiced nuts with the fruit cup.

The chicken salad has a wonderfully crunchy texture and its flavour is enhanced by letting the cooked chicken marinate in the warmed dressing beforehand. Assemble this salad just before your guests arrive and keep it

covered in the refrigerator. Serve it with croissants; they make a delicious and unusual change from bread rolls. If you like, place them on a sheet of absorbent paper and warm through (see Countdown) just before serving.

The fruit dip makes a lovely fresh pudding; choose a good selection of fruits in season to go with it, looking for different colours and textures. Your guests spear these on forks and dip them into the creamy dip. Coffee and pretty Petits Fours complete a sensational feast.

Raspberry cream dip

2 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

175g / 6oz frozen raspberries
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
150ml / ¼pt whipping or double cream, lightly whipped
15-30ml / 1-2 tbls caster sugar
sprig of mint, optional, to decorate

TO SERVE
selection of fresh fruits in season
crushed ice

SERVES 12

1 Place raspberries in a shallow dish and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2-3 minutes. Leave to stand for 4 minutes, to soften completely.
2 Fold yoghurt into cream. Sieve the raspberries and fold the purée into the cream. Add sugar to taste, turn into a small bowl and chill in the refrigerator.
3 Prepare the fruit according to type and refrigerate, closely covered with stretch wrap.
4 To serve, place crushed ice in a shallow glass dish. Place the raspberry dip in the middle and arrange the fruit around it. Decorate with a sprig of mint, if liked.

Crunchy chicken salad

16 mins

Standing time: none

6 boneless chicken breasts, skinned
1 large crisp lettuce
150g / 5oz radishes, sliced
175g / 6oz grapes, halved and seeded
100g / 4oz almonds, halved
1 large green pepper, seeded and diced
12 croissants, warmed (see Countdown), to serve

DRESSING
1 onion, chopped
50ml / 2fl oz red wine vinegar
75ml / 3fl oz sunflower or corn oil
pinch of sugar
salt and pepper

SERVES 12

1 Place the chicken on a roasting rack, cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and the juices run clear.
2 Put ingredients for the dressing in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes.
3 Dice the chicken while still warm and quickly stir into the warm, dressing. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
4 When ready to serve, wash and dry lettuce and shred one-quarter of it. Line a serving bowl with the whole leaves.
5 Reserve a few radish slices slices and mix the rest with the shredded lettuce, chicken and dressing, grapes, almonds and green pepper. Spoon on top of the lettuce leaves and place the radish slices in the centre. Serve with the croissants.

Countdown

Up to two weeks before the meal
Microwave the Spiced Nuts and store in an airtight container.

In the morning
Prepare the Petits Fours and store in an airtight container. Prepare the Fruit Cup, but do not add the strawberries and carbonated water. Hull strawberries; place in a separate container. Chill strawberries and water. Prepare watermelon bowl, cover and chill.

Three hours before the meal
Add the chicken to the dressing cover and chill. Prepare the Raspberry Cream Dip and fresh fruit dippers, cover and chill.

Thirty minutes before the meal
Add the strawberries to the Fruit Cup syrup mixture and refrigerate. Rub the rim of each serving glass with the cut edge of a lemon wedge, then dip the rim in caster sugar. Slit the base of 12 strawberries and place one on the rim of each glass. Chill. Arrange the Petits Fours on a cake stand.

Just before the meal
Serve the Fruit Cup with the Spiced Nuts. Warm the croissants, six at a time on absorbent paper, for 45 seconds – 1 minute at 100% (High). Line a serving dish with lettuce leaves, spoon in the Chicken Salad and place on table.

Menu

SPICED MIXED NUTS
Shelled nuts with a peppery coating

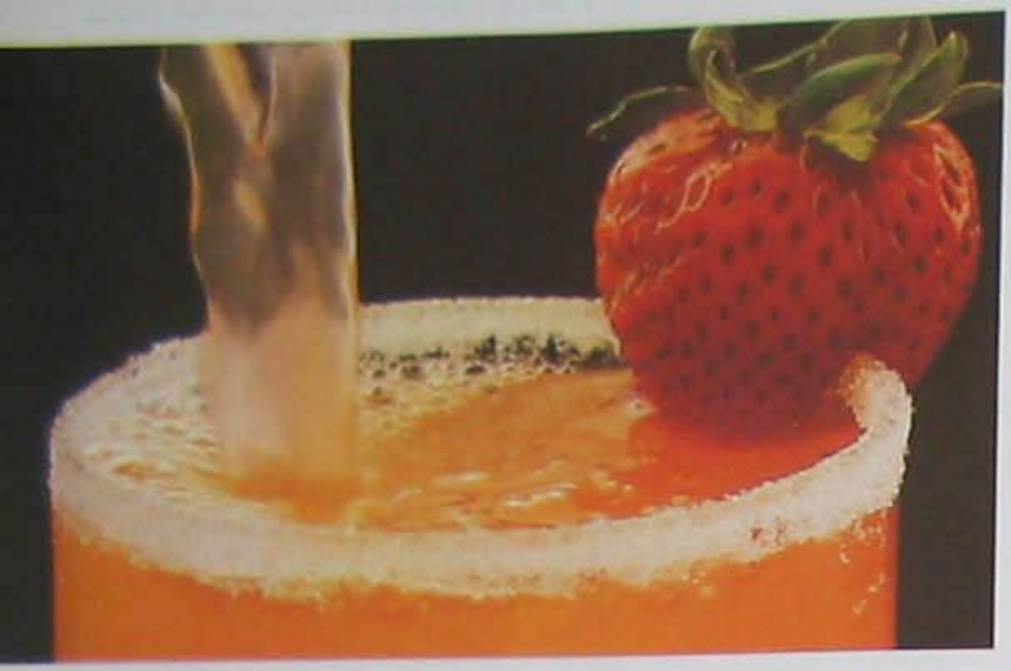
SPARKLING FRUIT CUP
A fruity non-alcoholic punch attractively served

CRUNCHY CHICKEN SALAD
A delicious medley of flavours and textures

RASPBERRY CREAM DIP
Served with a selection of fresh fruit 'dippers'

COFFEE AND PETITS FOURS
Miniature fondant-iced sponge cakes

SERVES 12



Sparkling fruit cup

13 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz caster sugar
575ml / 1pt hot water
450g / 1lb strawberries, hulled
225ml / 8fl oz red grape juice
juice of 5 oranges
juice of 5 lemons
1L / 1¾pt bottle carbonated water

TO SERVE
1 large watermelon, optional crushed ice

SERVES 12

1 Place sugar and water in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 9-12 minutes, or until boiling. Remove cover and cook for 4 minutes more. Leave to cool.
2 Place strawberries in a large bowl and add grape juice and cooled syrup. Combine orange and lemon juices and make up to 575ml / 1pt with water, if necessary. Add to strawberries; chill.
3 Prepare watermelon if using.
4 To serve, put some crushed ice into the watermelon or a large glass serving bowl. Tip in the chilled strawberry mixture, then pour in carbonated water. Ladle into frosted glasses.

Spiced mixed nuts

7¾ mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine cut in small pieces
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
2.5-5ml / ½-1tsp salt
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic powder
large pinch of cayenne
700g / 1½lb shelled, mixed, unsalted nuts

SERVES 12

1 Place the butter in a large casserole and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 45 seconds-1 minute, or until melted.
2 Stir in Worcestershire sauce, salt garlic, and cayenne. Add nuts and stir to coat evenly.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until the nuts have absorbed the butter, stirring 2-3 times during cooking.
4 Line a large baking sheet with absorbent paper and spread out the nuts to dry. Divide the spiced nuts between small bowls for serving.

Cook's notes

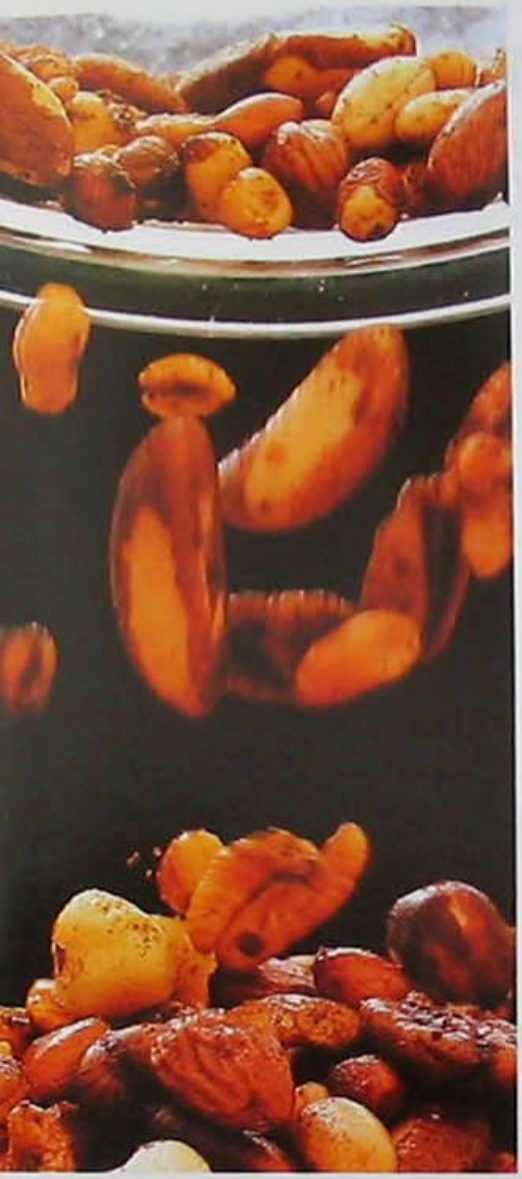
You can make the nuts in advance and store them in an airtight container for 1-2 weeks.

How to prepare a watermelon bowl

Cut *a thin slice from the bottom so melon stands firmly. Slice off the top third. Use a melon baller to scoop out the flesh. Discard seeds.*

Cut *a decorative scallop shell edging to a 'V'-shaped design round the top, using a sharp knife. Drain shell and place in refrigerator.*

When ready to serve, *place crushed ice in the watermelon shell and tip in the fruit cup. Add the carbonated water. Serve melon balls separately.*



PAUL GRATER

Left: *Sparkling Fruit Cup*
Above: *Spiced Mixed Nuts*

Petits fours

½ min

Standing time: none

15 × 7.5 / 6 × 3in plain sponge cake, about 4cm / 1½in deep
45ml / 3tbls apricot jam
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
25g / 8oz packet fondant or moulding icing
green and pink food colouring
cornflour for dusting
sugar or wafer flowers, to decorate

MAKES 24

1 Cut the cake in half horizontally, then cut each piece in half lengthways. Cut each slice into 6 to give 24 squares.

2 Put the apricot jam and lemon juice into a small bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 30 seconds. Stir, then sieve the mixture. Coat each square with the warm glaze.

3 Divide the fondant into three. Add a few drops of green colouring to one-third and few drops of pink colouring to another third. Knead fondant to colour evenly.

4 Lightly dust a work surface or board with cornflour and roll out each third of the fondant to a rectangle measuring 17.5 × 7.5cm / 7 × 3in. Cut into 8 even-sized pieces and gently mould each piece around the cake squares. Decorate each with a sugar flower.

Petits Fours

VARIATION

If you prefer, choose a flavoured cake to make these petits fours — you can buy them at any supermarket. Choose a firm sponge with a mild flavour, such as banana, lemon or orange. Stronger flavours will be too rich when iced.

Microtips

When thawing the raspberries for the dip, microwave only until the fruit is just thawed but still icy — remember that it will continue to soften during standing time.

Smoked fish

When you want quick, tasty dishes, use your microwave to turn smoked fish into a winner. A brilliant kedgeree, a hearty chowder or an elegant mousseline are just some ideas.

The chances are you have never thought of using smoked fish to rustle up fast food. But try it — it's extraordinarily versatile and its good strong taste means a little can be made to go a long way. You'll be surprised at the great variety of dishes you can make, for lots of different occasions. Golden Kedgeree is super for a Sunday brunch, and Fishcakes with Herb Sauce are excellent for tea.

You might be surprised, too, at the number of varieties of smoked fish available. Between the humble kipper and the luxury smoked salmon, you will find smoked haddock, cod, mackerel and trout — all with their own distinctive taste. Buy them fresh, vacuum-packed or frozen; there are instructions below for how to deal with all of these in the microwave.

Smoked salmon need not be out of reach, pricewise, incidentally; look for 'pieces' — small bits cut close to the skin — that are often sold quite cheaply. Try it in Smoked Salmon Mousselines.

Golden Kedgeree

Golden kedgeree

22 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

50g / 2oz finely chopped onion
1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
pinch of saffron powder
100g / 4oz frozen peas
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
75g / 3oz long-grain white rice
75g / 3oz brown rice
425ml / ¾pt hot stock
450g / 1lb smoked cod or haddock

PAUL CRAIER

fillet, skinned and boned, cut into even chunks
45ml / 3tbls natural yoghurt
1 hard-boiled egg, coarsely chopped
chopped parsley

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine the onion, red pepper, saffron, peas, butter, both sorts of rice and hot stock in a large bowl. Cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 16-18 minutes, stirring once during cooking.
2 Arrange the fish in a layer over the rice mixture. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until the fish is cooked. Gently stir it into the rice.
3 Stand, covered, for 3 minutes. Serve topped with the yoghurt, if liked, and garnished with the hard-boiled egg and a sprinkling of chopped parsley.

Cook's notes

Mixing brown and white rice in the kedgeree gives it additional texture as well as flavour. If you prefer to use only white rice, reduce the cooking time at stage 1 to 10-12 minutes. If using all brown rice, cook for 20-22 minutes.

Mustard and sesame trout

6½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

10ml / 2tsp wholegrain mustard
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
10ml / 2tsp sesame seeds
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
150ml / ¼pt light stock and milk, mixed
2-3 smoked trout, total weight about 450g / 1lb

SERVES 2-3

1 Mix the mustard, cornflour, sesame seeds, butter, stock and milk together in a small basin. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring thoroughly two or three times during cooking. Spoon into a sauce boat or jug.
2 Arrange the trout head to tail on a plate. Cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, turning the plate after 1½ minutes.
3 Leave to stand for 2 minutes. Meanwhile, reheat the sauce, covered, for 1 minute, or until heated through at 100% (High), stirring once. Serve the trout and sauce with slices of buttered bread and a green salad.

Mustard and Sesame Trout

DAVE KING

Microtips

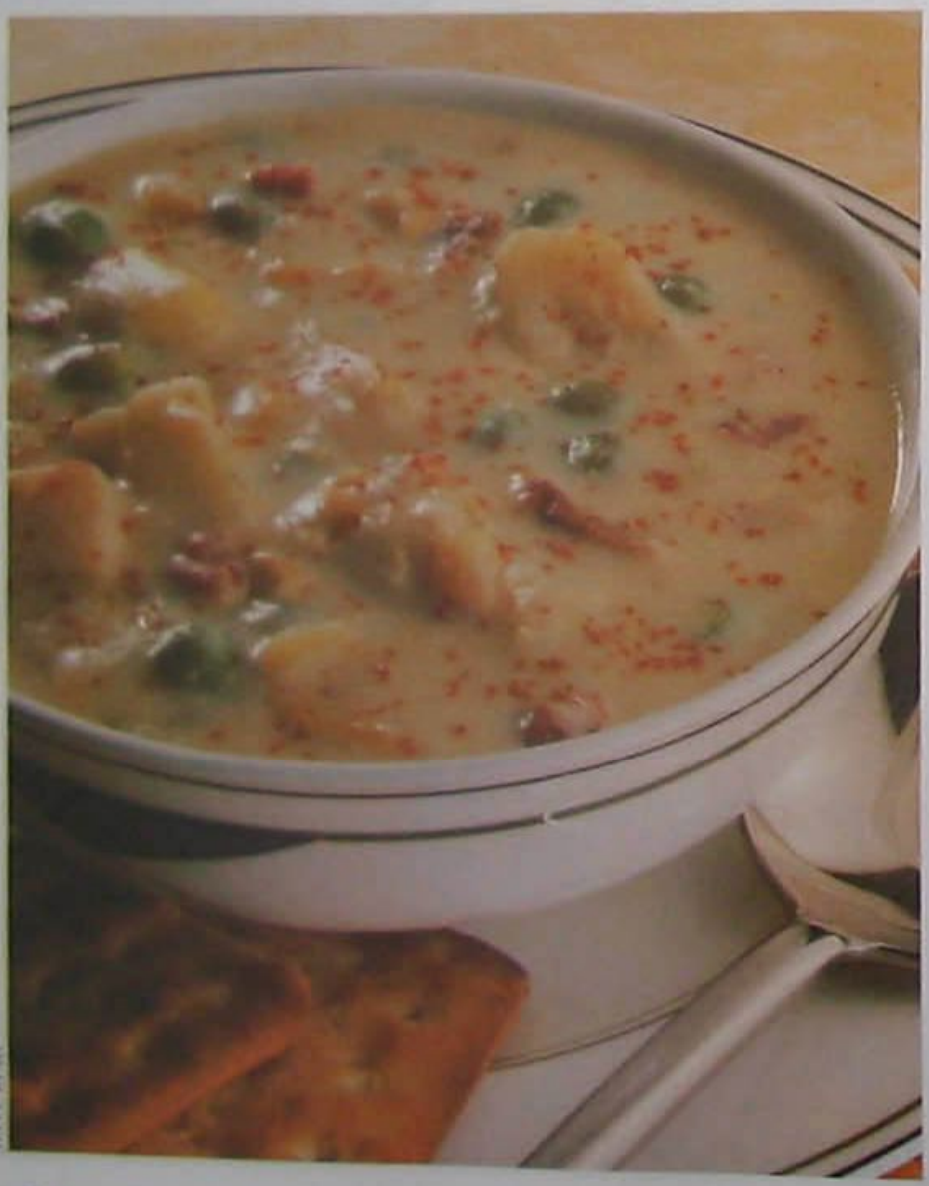
Vacuum-packed smoked fish can be microwaved in the bag and served hot. Pierce the packet and place it on a plate. Microwave at 100% (High), allowing 1 minute for 100g / 4oz, 1-2 minutes for 225g / 8oz and 2-3 minutes for 450g / 1lb.

How to microwave frozen smoked fish

Place *frozen fish on a dish in a single layer and cover with vented stretch wrap. If fish is in a bag, cut several slits in the bag. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-7 minutes per 450g / 1lb, turning dish halfway through.*

Remove *the fish when it is thawed at the edges, but is still icy in the centre to avoid cooking the fish. Remove from the bag or uncover and stand for 5 minutes until completely thawed. Pat dry if necessary.*

To heat *thawed, loose or vacuum-packed fish, place on a plate, alternating thick and thin portions. Cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes per 450g / 1lb until heated.*



Smoked salmon mousselines

6 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Make these mousselines for a delicious special occasion meal, garnished with lumpfish roe.

100g / 4oz smoked salmon
50g / 2oz very finely chopped onion
50g / 2oz fresh white breadcrumbs
150ml / ¼pt single cream
2 eggs, beaten
black pepper
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
large pinch of dried dillweed
black or red lumpfish roe, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Finely chop or mince the smoked salmon. Mix it with the onion, breadcrumbs, cream and eggs. Season to taste with pepper.
2 Divide the mixture between four buttered ramekins or 150ml / ¼pt dishes. Cover each one with vented stretch wrap and stand in a circle on a plate.
3 Microwave at 30% (Defrost) for 6-8 minutes until the mousselines are firm round the edge and softly set in the centre.
4 Stand for 2 minutes then turn out. Mix soured cream with lemon juice and dillweed; serve with mousselines. Garnish with roe.

Haddock chowder

26½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz streaky bacon, trimmed and diced
350g / 12oz potatoes cut into 12mm / ½in dice
50g / 2oz frozen peas
335g / 11.8oz can sweetcorn with peppers
60ml / 4tbls water
350g / 12oz smoked haddock fillet, skinned and boned, cut into even chunks

Above: *Smoked Salmon Mousselines*
Left: *Haddock Chowder*

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
25g / 1oz plain flour
575ml / 1pt milk
salt and pepper
paprika, for dusting
cream crackers to serve

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the bacon in a tureen or large bowl, cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
2 Add the potatoes, peas, sweetcorn and water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, until potatoes are just tender.
3 Place fish in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until just tender.
4 Place butter in a large jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until melted. Stir in flour and blend until smooth. Add milk and stir well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until just boiling, stirring every minute. Pour into the fish mixture, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, stirring two or three times, until it is heated through.
5 Season to taste with salt and pepper. Dust with paprika and serve with cream crackers.

VARIATION
Use smooth mashed or instant potato instead of diced, so that the base is a thin potato purée. Add some sliced onion and celery, together with peeled and diced tomato to give texture and colour.

Fishcakes with herb sauce

20¾ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

65g / 2½oz packet instant potato
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp dried parsley
250ml / 9fl oz milk
350g / 12oz smoked cod fillet, skinned and boned, cubed
50g / 2oz plain flour
75g / 3oz toasted breadcrumbs

SAUCE
15g / ½oz finely chopped onion
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
5ml / 1tsp cornflour

RAY DUNS

Fish Cakes with Herby Sauce

227g / 8oz can tomatoes, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Tip the instant potato into a mixing bowl and add 15g / ½oz butter and the parsley.
2 Put the milk into a jug and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until boiling. Pour over the potato and stir briskly to make a stiff mixture. Turn on to a plate to cool.
3 Place fish in a basin, cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, until it flakes easily. Drain and flake the fish, then stir it into the potato, mixing well. Cool.
4 Meanwhile, place the onion and thyme for the sauce in a jug or bowl and add 15g / ½oz of the remaining butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until onion is tender.
5 Blend the cornflour into the onion and thyme mixture, then add the chopped tomatoes with their juice, the garlic and tomato ketchup. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until thick, stirring twice. Season.
6 Divide the potato and fish mixture into eight equal portions and shape each into a round cake on a well-floured board. Place the remaining butter in a small bowl and microwave, covered, for 45-60 seconds, until melted.
7 Spread the breadcrumbs on a plate. Brush the fishcakes with melted butter and roll them in the crumbs to coat thoroughly.
8 Place the fishcakes in a circle on a plate and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Drizzle the remaining melted butter over the fishcakes, and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes more, until very hot.
9 Stand for 2 minutes. Reheat at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.

Microtips

For speed, these fishcakes have been made with instant potato. If you prefer, cut 350g / 12oz potatoes in chunks. Place in a bowl with 45ml / 3tbls water and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, or until tender. Test by piercing with a sharp knife. Drain and mash well with about 60ml / 4tbls milk and a small knob of butter. Mix with salt and pepper. Spread on a plate to cool and continue recipe from step 4.

Adapting a recipe: stews

A steaming pot of aromatic meat, poultry or fish and vegetables will brighten up the bleakest day. From the microwave to the table: what could be simpler?

A colourful medley of meat, poultry or fish and vegetables cooked in a tasty sauce will always be a popular meal, and stews and casseroles are even easier to make in the microwave than they are conventionally.

The most important difference between cooking a stew conventionally or microwaving it is that no amount of microwaving will improve a tough cut of meat. For a microwaved stew then, choose a fairly tender cut of meat and for best results, trim off any fat or gristle. Alternatively, use poultry or fish, which always give good results. Microwaving at a gentle 50% (Medium) will avoid toughening a potentially tender cut of meat.

When microwaving stews, cut all the ingredients, both meat and vegetables, into small even-sized pieces to aid quick and even cooking. Using cooked meat and poultry will speed things along even more; with the microwave you need never waste leftovers.

Reduce the liquid content slightly when adapting a conventional recipe, as there will be slightly less evaporation in the microwave. But check during cooking and add more liquid if necessary. Either toss the meat in seasoned flour before microwaving, to thicken the sauce during cooking, or stir in a flour and water mixture towards the end. Adding cream or yoghurt will give a richer thickened result.

Be more reserved with herbs and spice flavourings too; microwaving tends to intensify their flavours.

Microtips

If you like lots of sauce or gravy in your stew do not reduce the liquid content when adapting recipes; simply add a little more flour for thickening the sauce. Cream or yoghurt can also be used.

Hearty beef stew

CONVENTIONAL RECIPE

900g/2lb chuck or braising steak, cut into 4cm/1½in cubes
30ml/2tbls vegetable oil
350ml/12fl oz beef stock
150ml/¼pt red wine
1 large onion, sliced
1 bay leaf
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
salt and pepper
225g/½lb carrots, quartered
450g/1lb potatoes, cut into eighths
3 celery stalks, quartered lengthways
450g/1lb small onions
45ml/3tbls plain flour
45ml/3tbls water

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the meat in a large, heavy-based saucepan. Brown in the oil over a medium heat. Add the stock and wine, sliced onion, bay leaf, garlic and seasoning. Cover and simmer gently for 1½ hours, stirring occasionally.

2 Discard the bay leaf and add the vegetables. Cover and simmer for 35-45 minutes, or until the meat and vegetables are really tender.

3 Blend together the flour and water and stir into the stew. Stir continuously until thickened, then cook for another 3 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Omit
Reduce slightly
3.4L/6pt casserole
Add at the end
Omit
Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then reduce to 50% (Medium)
Microwave at 50% (Medium)
Stir once

Hearty beef stew

82 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Serve this dish with a full-bodied red wine such as Chianti.

900g / 2lb good quality chuck steak, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
275ml / ½pt hot beef stock
150ml / ¼pt red wine
1 large onion, sliced
1 bay leaf
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
225g / 8oz carrots, thinly sliced
450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into large dice
3 celery stalks, cut into 4cm / 1½in pieces
450g / 1lb small onions
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
45ml / 3tbls water
salt and pepper

SERVES 6-8

1 Put the meat, stock, wine, sliced onion, bay leaf and garlic into a 3.4L / 6pt casserole and stir together. Cover tightly and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.

2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 40 minutes, stirring every 8 minutes.

3 Discard the bay leaf and add the carrots, potatoes, celery and onions. Stir well and microwave, covered, for 35-45 minutes, or until the meat and vegetables are tender.

4 Blend the flour and water together and stir into the stew. Season to taste then microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until thick and bubbly, stirring once. Stand for 5 minutes, then serve.

VARIATION

For a herby flavour, stir in 30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley.

Cook's notes

To tenderize beef and break down tough fibres before microwaving, marinate in wine and lemon juice or wine vinegar for several hours or overnight in the refrigerator, or beat the meat thoroughly on both sides with a wetted mallet or a rolling pin.

Turkey casserole

7 mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, chopped
½ small red pepper, seeded and chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
225-350g / 8-12oz cooked turkey, cut into bite-sized pieces
400g / 14oz can cream of chicken soup
3 hardboiled eggs, roughly chopped
50g / 2oz slivered almonds
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz packet potato sticks

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion, pepper and celery in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
2 Add the turkey, soup, chopped eggs, almonds, lemon juice and seasoning, and half the potato sticks. Stir well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until hot.
3 Stir well and sprinkle the remaining potato sticks over the mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot.

Spring chicken stew

13 mins

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz cooked chicken, cut into bite-sized pieces
150-175g / 5-6oz tagliatelle
850ml / 1½pt hot chicken stock, made with 1 chicken stock cube
100g / 4oz frozen mixed vegetables
pinch dried marjoram
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
175ml / 6fl oz Greek yoghurt
freshly ground black pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the chicken, tagliatelle, chicken stock, mixed vegetables and marjoram in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, or until the noodles are tender. Stir every 4 minutes.
2 Blend the flour with the yoghurt and stir into the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1-2 minutes, or until the sauce is thickened and bubbly, stirring once. Season and serve.

Above: *Turkey Casserole*
Right: *Spring Chicken Stew*

Creamy chicken and wine stew

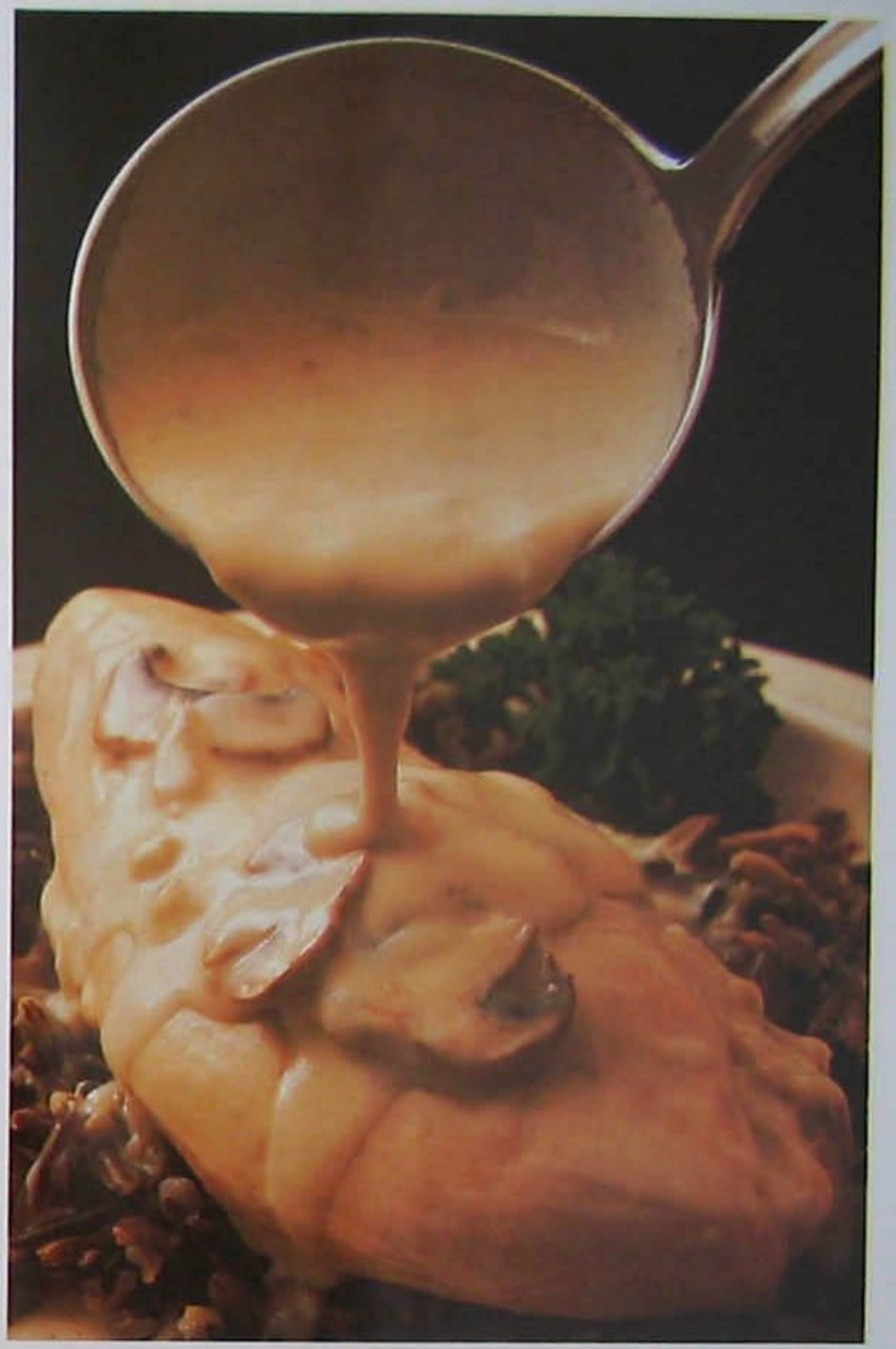
14 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
175g / 6oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
4 chicken breast fillets, about 75-100g / 3-4oz each
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
75ml / 3fl oz dry white wine
125ml / 4fl oz double cream
salt and pepper
wild or brown rice, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter, mushrooms and onion in a shallow casserole, large enough to take the chicken breasts in a single layer. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes or until tender.
2 Arrange the chicken breasts on top of the vegetables, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, turning once.
3 Meanwhile, blend the flour and wine into a smooth paste, then gradually stir in the cream. Season to taste.
4 Remove the chicken from the dish and stir the cream mixture into the vegetables. Arrange the chicken on top, spooning a little sauce over each fillet. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-10 minutes, or until the chicken is tender and no longer pink when pierced with a knife. Rearrange the chicken and rotate the dish once during cooking.
5 Serve immediately with boiled rice and a fresh green salad.



How to microwave Creamy chicken and wine stew

Arrange *the chicken breasts on top of the softened vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High).*

Blend *in the flour, wine and cream for the sauce, spooning liberally over the chicken breasts. Continue to microwave at 50% (Medium) until the chicken is no longer pink, rotating the dish once and rearranging the chicken.*

Fish and pasta fricassee

14 mins

Standing time: none

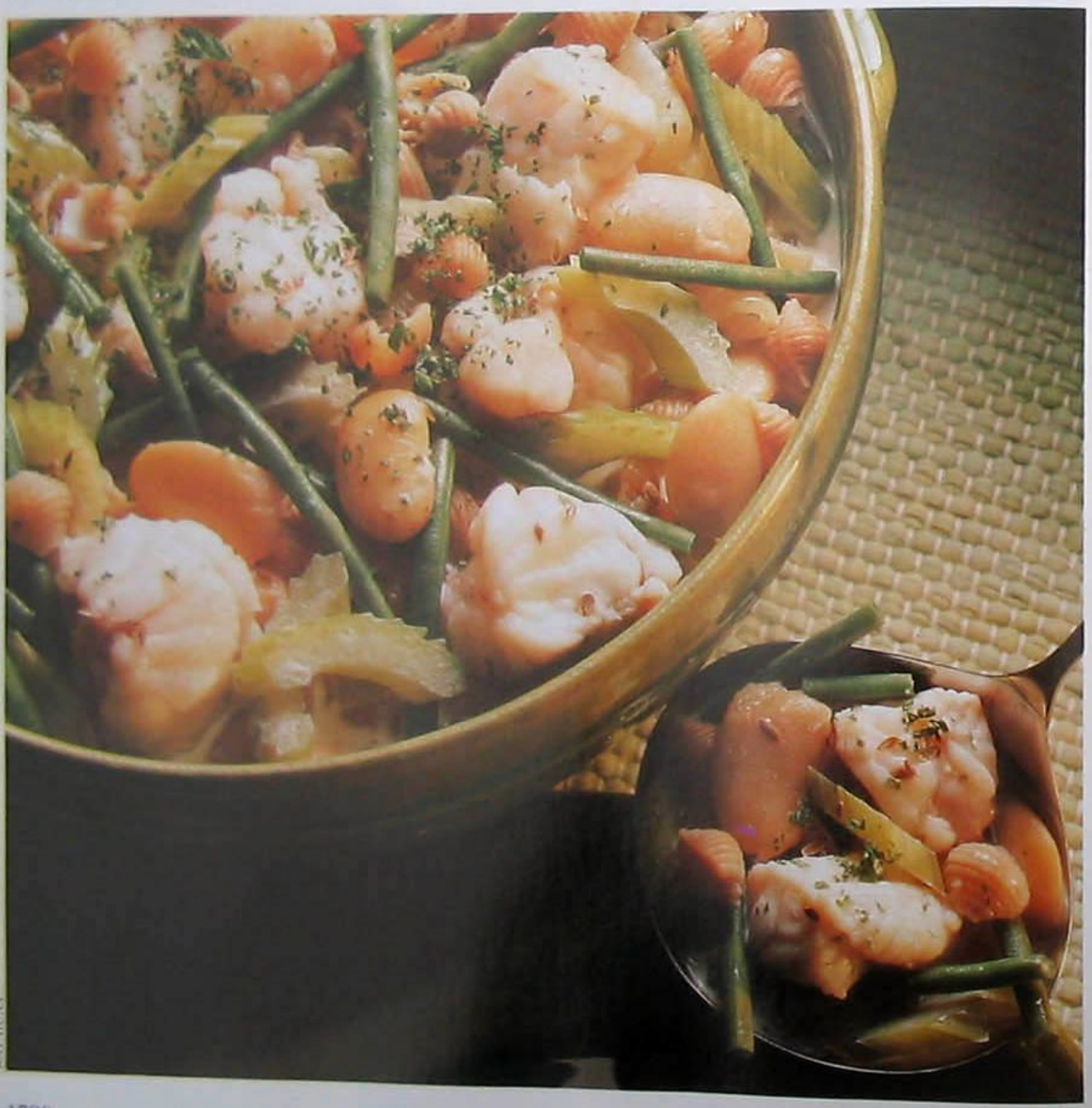
1 large onion, thinly sliced
100g / 4oz wholewheat pasta shells
2 celery stalks, sliced
100g / 4oz French beans, cut into 5cm / 2in lengths
grated zest of ½ lemon
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp dried dill
425ml / ¾pt boiling fish or vegetable stock
600-700g / 1¼-1½lb monkfish,* skinned, bones removed and cut into 2.5cm / 1in chunks
198g / 7oz can butter beans
salt and pepper
75ml / 3fl oz cream

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion, pasta, celery, beans, lemon zest and juice, dill and stock into 1.7L / 3pt casserole and stir. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes.
2 Add the fish chunks, butter beans and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, until the fish is tender.
3 Stir in the cream and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until heated through.

VARIATION
Other white fish, such as haddock,* could be used. However, as it is unlikely to be as firm-textured as monkfish, add after 10 minutes and microwave for 4 minutes, until it just flakes easily.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
*Use gemfish or ling.



Sausages from the freezer

Frozen sausages are a super stand-by — microwave-thaw and cook them for a hearty breakfast, a speedy snack, an easy lunch or supper, or a fun party dish.

Sausages are suitable for so many occasions that it is well worth keeping a few packs in the freezer. For example, when you have hungry children or fancy a quick snack, sausages for two can be thawed and cooked in under 10 minutes. For a hearty mid-week supper, serve sausages in sauces and salads, or slice them to make bite-sized party eats. The microwave makes thawing and cooking so quick and easy, you'll find that sausages are more popular than ever.

Types of frozen sausage

There are all sorts of frozen sausages to choose from: pork, pork and beef, or pork and turkey are the most common frozen sausages. Available from supermarkets and freezer centres, they can all be thawed and cooked as directed in the steps and chart on pages 1722-23, so use as you prefer.

Sausages generally come in two sizes: standard, which weigh about 50g / 2oz each, and thin chipolatas, about 25g / 1oz each. Cocktail sausages are sometimes available. These are much shorter than standard sausages and are excellent for kebabs or party eats, pierced with cocktail sticks and served with a dip. Or use thin chipolatas and cut them to size after cooking.

Sausage-in-a-bun

RAY DUNS

Thawing sausages

Sausages are generally frozen individually, then packed together so any number can be removed when required. To thaw, place in a single layer in a dish, rearranging once to ensure even thawing. However, if sausages are in a frozen mass, microwave-thaw as directed, separating them and arranging in a single layer as soon as possible. Never return half-thawed sausages to the freezer.

Cooking sausages

For best results, microwave sausages in a browning dish as this gives appetizingly roasted results. Otherwise, cook sausages on a roasting rack. They do not brown as well on a rack, so first brush them with a browning agent. Arrange in rows on the rack which should be placed in a shallow dish to catch the juices and fat released during cooking. Cooking times are the same as for sausages in a browning dish. Drain cooked sausages on absorbent paper before serving or using in recipes.

Cook's notes

The recipe time boxes include time taken to thaw sausages. Standing times include standing the sausages after thawing.

Curried sausages

22 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

For a mid-week supper, serve this spicy dish with rice and chutney.

SAUCE

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
2 onions, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
22.5ml / 1½tbls curry powder
575ml / 1pt boiling chicken stock
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
30ml / 2tbls sultanas
salt and pepper

8 frozen standard sausages, thawed and cooked (see chart, opposite)

SERVES 4

1 To make the sauce: place the oil and onions in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes. Stir in the flour and curry powder. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.
2 Gradually stir in the stock. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thickened. Stir in the tomato purée, sultanas and seasoning. Continue microwaving for 2 minutes.
3 Add the sausages and microwave for 3-4 minutes to heat.

Sausage-in-a-bun

7½ mins

Standing time: 4 mins

Kids will love these home-made hot dogs. They are just the thing for a speedy high-tea. Serve wrapped in a paper napkin — take-away style.

4 frozen standard sausages
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls barbecue or tomato sauce or relish
4 Vienna or Frankfurt bread rolls with sesame seeds

SERVES 4

1 Thaw and cook the sausages as directed in the chart, opposite. Leave to stand for 2 minutes after cooking.
2 Meanwhile, place the butter in a small, dish; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the barbecue sauce or relish, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, then stir again.
3 Split the rolls and fill with a sausage and some sauce.

VARIATIONS

Substitute a favourite relish in place of the barbecue sauce.

Right: *Tomato Sausage Casserole*

How to thaw frozen sausages

Put *required number of frozen sausages in a shallow dish, large enough to hold them in a single layer; space out evenly if free flowing.*

Microwave *at 20-30% (Defrost) as directed in the chart, opposite, turning sausages over and rearranging, or separating them if necessary, once.*

Check *the sausages are thawed by pressing gently: they should feel softened. Stand as directed in chart to complete thawing before cooking.*

Microwaving times for thawing and cooking sausages

TYPE	AMOUNT	THAWING TIME AT 20-30% (DEFROST)	STANDING TIME	COOKING TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
standard (50g / 2oz each)	8 6 4 2	5-6 mins 4-5 mins 3-4 mins 1½-2 mins	4 mins 4 mins 2 mins 2 mins	4½-5½ mins 4-4½ mins 3½-4½ mins 3-4 mins
chipolata (25g / 1oz each)	16 8 6 4	6-7 mins 3-3½ mins 2½-3 mins 1½-2 mins	4 mins 4 mins 2 mins 2 mins	5-6 mins 2-3 mins 1½-2½ mins 1-2 mins

RAY DUNS

Tomato sausage casserole

16 mins

Standing time: 9 mins

15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 large onion, roughly chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small red pepper, seeded and chopped
4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and snipped
8 frozen standard sausages, thawed (see chart, above)
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the oil, onion, garlic, red pepper and bacon in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
2 Prick the sausages and arrange in the casserole; cover with the tomatoes and herbs. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, or until bubbling, stirring once. Season to taste.
3 Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

How to microwave thawed sausages

Pre-heat *a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to manufacturer's instructions. Swirl 5ml / 1tsp oil over the base. Prick the sausages and arrange in a single layer. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) as in the chart, above, or until cooked, turning once. Drain on absorbent paper.*

Microtips

When using a browning dish to cook sausages, always take great care as the dish gets very hot. Check your microwave manufacturer's handbook and never heat the dish for longer than recommended. Handle with oven gloves and do not remove the lid immediately after microwaving until spitting subsides.

Sausage and potato salad

16½ mins

Standing time: 4 mins

Serve with green salad for an easy lunch or summer salad dish.

450g / 1lb small potatoes, halved
30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 1tbls apple or lemon juice
45ml / 3tbls thick mayonnaise
8 frozen standard sausages, thawed and cooked (see chart, page 1723)
½ onion, sliced into rings
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives

SERVES 4

1 Place the potatoes and water in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes. Drain, then cool completely.
2 In a 2.3L / 4pt serving dish, mix together the fruit juice and mayonnaise until smooth.
3 Cut each sausage into six. Add to mayonnaise with potatoes and onions, and stir gently to mix. Sprinkle with snipped chives.

VARIATION
Fruity sausage salad: stir in one chopped eating apple and 15ml / 1tbls cashew nuts with potatoes.

Microtips

Remember to prick sausages once or twice with a fork before cooking. This prevents steam building up under the skins causing the sausages to explode in the cooker.

Sausage and Potato Salad

Sausage and bean pie

31 mins

Standing time: 9 mins

450g / 1lb potatoes, quartered
30ml / 2tbls water
30ml / 2tbls milk
50g / 2oz butter
salt and pepper
1 onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
2 garlic cloves, crushed
100g / 4oz mushrooms, chopped
220g / 8oz can baked beans in tomato sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried sage
175ml / 6fl oz hot chicken stock
16 frozen chipolata sausages, thawed and cooked (see chart, page 1723)

SERVES 4

1 Place the potatoes and water in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, or until tender. Stand 5 minutes. Drain and mash with the milk and half the butter. Season to taste.
2 Place onion and oil in a 20cm / 8in round casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until onion is soft.
3 Stir in the flour, garlic and mushrooms and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes. Stir in the beans and sage.
4 Stir in the stock and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until boiling.
5 Slice each sausage into three and add to the beans. Spread the potato over the top and dot with the remaining butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes to heat. Sprinkle with paprika, or brown under a hot grill.

Cook's notes

If browning the sausage pie under the grill, be sure to use a heat-proof casserole. Do not use a plastic dish as this will start to melt under direct heat.

Sausage croquettes

29 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
50g / 2oz butter
700g / 1½lb potatoes, quartered
30ml / 2tbls water
salt and pepper
8 frozen standard sausages, thawed and cooked (see chart, page 1723)
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
1 egg, beaten

SERVES 4

1 Place the breadcrumbs and half the butter in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, or until golden brown, stirring every minute. Spread the browned crumbs on a plate.
2 Place the potatoes and water in a 850ml / 1½pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-12 minutes, or until tender, stirring once. Stand for 5 minutes. Drain and mash with the remaining butter and season to taste.
3 Spread about 30ml / 2tbls mashed potato evenly over each sausage and pat into shape. Roll each croquette in flour, then egg and finally the browned crumbs.
4 Arrange the croquettes on a roasting rack and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes. Let stand for 1-2 minutes. Serve with baked beans, if liked.

Party sausages

16½ mins

Standing time: 9 mins

30 frozen cocktail sausages
5ml / 1tsp vegetable oil

DIP
150ml / ¼pt milk
150ml / ¼pt beer
40g / 1½oz butter
40g / 1½oz plain flour
10ml / 2tsp wholegrain mustard
salt and pepper

SERVES 10

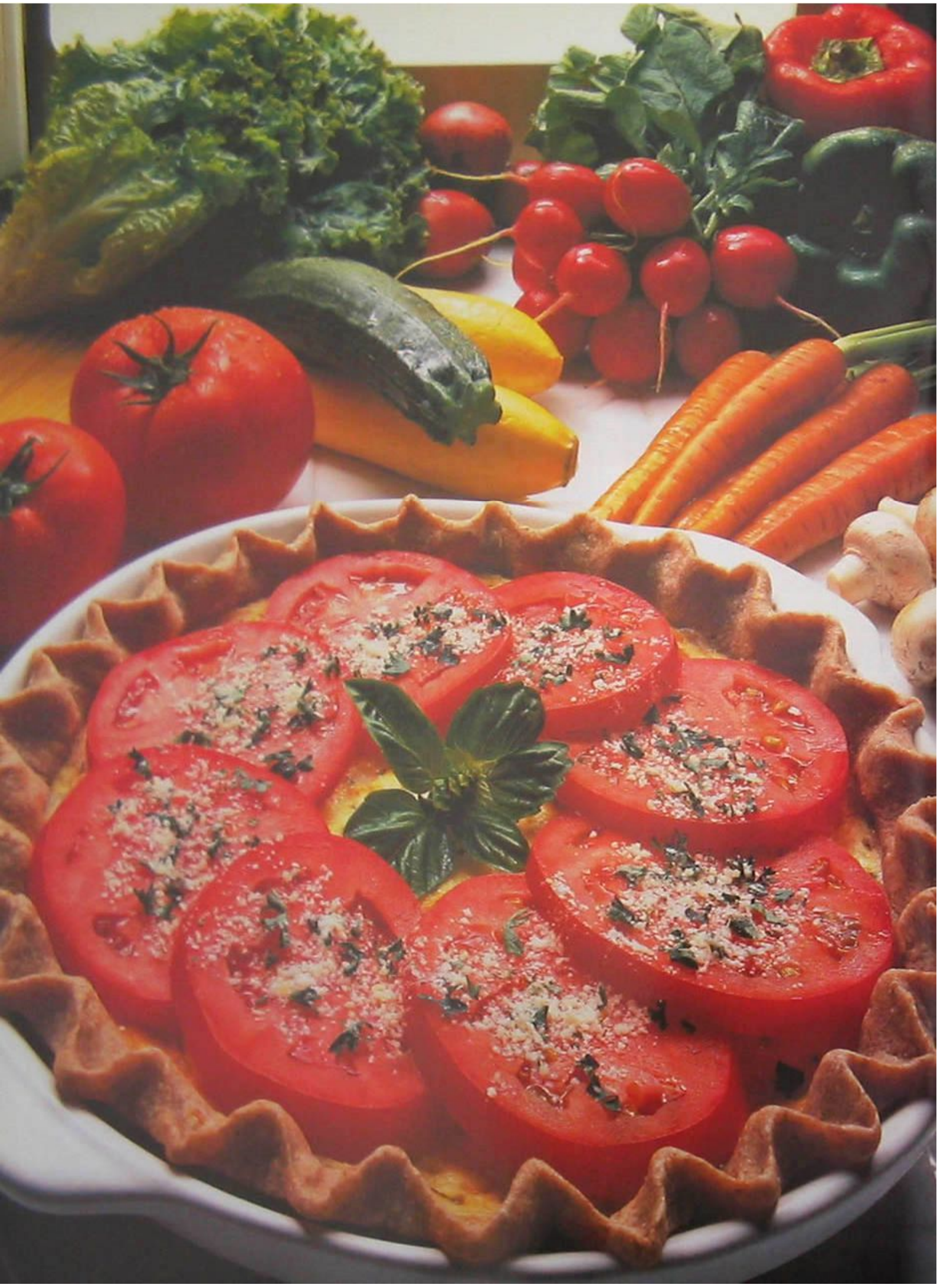
1 Place all the sausages on a large plate and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4½-5 minutes, turning over and rearranging once. Let stand for 4 minutes.
2 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Swirl the oil over the base. Prick the sausages and add to the dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes, or until cooked, rearranging once. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, combine the milk, beer, butter and flour in a measuring jug, whisking well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, until thickened and smooth, whisking with a fork every minute. Stir in the mustard and season to taste.
4 Drain the sausages on absorbent paper and arrange on a large serving platter. Place the sauce in a small bowl and place in the centre of the sausages. Spear the sausages on cocktail sticks and serve.

VARIATION
Use 10 frozen chipolata sausages instead of cocktail sausages if necessary. Thaw and cook as directed in chart, page 1723, then cut each sausage into three pieces. Serve the pieces on cocktail sticks, with the dip.

RAY DUNS

Above: *Sausage Croquettes*
Right: *Party Sausages*

RAY DUNS



Meatless main courses

Cooking a main course which is not based on meat is easy — and fun. By their very nature such dishes are bound to be colourful and, provided you don't overcook, full of flavour too.

Many cooks, especially those with a family to feed, worry that a meal without meat isn't a 'proper' meal and that it may lack protein. Protein is an essential part of a healthy diet, providing the body with the nutrients it needs for growth, good strong hair, nails, teeth, skin and so on, and to repair the general wear and tear of daily life. Children, in particular, need protein to help fuel growth.

Protein is present in a vast range of foods, and consists of substances called amino acids. In the past it was thought that protein from animal sources — meat, fish, cheese, milk, eggs — was better than vegetable protein because it contained all the essential amino acids — and in just the right proportions.

Vegetable proteins (such as rice and other cereals, pulses, nuts) often lack one or more amino acids. (Many vegetables themselves also contain some protein, but in less significant amounts.) Today, however, it is realized that this lack is easily made up by combining one vegetable protein with another, or with protein from a different source.

Tomato-topped Cheese Quiche

Complementary proteins

Combining different sources of protein together is something we do quite naturally in the course of preparing a dish or a meal. For example, it is uncommon to eat toast alone, but toast with baked beans or peanut butter makes a protein-packed snack with the cereal protein from the bread being complemented by that of the beans or peanuts. Another example of combining a cereal with a pulse is the Indian dish Dhal, that is rice with lentils.

Other vegetable combinations are nuts or seeds with a pulse, as in Hummous, the Greek dip made from sesame seed paste and chick-peas; also nuts or seeds with grains — muesli, for instance.

Grains, nuts, seeds and pulses are also combined with eggs and dairy produce to make a host of nourishing non-meat dishes. Macaroni cheese, egg fried rice, nut rissoles, breakfast cereals with milk, bread and cheese and pancakes are just a few examples, and the recipes here provide several more. Remember to serve them with plenty of high-fibre and vitamin-rich vegetables and salads, either raw and chopped or grated, or very lightly cooked to retain maximum goodness.

Tomato topped cheese quiche

14 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

23cm / 9in cooked wholewheat pastry case (see Part 4, page 87)

FILLING
225g / 8oz curd or ricotta cheese
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
2 eggs, beaten
15ml / 1tbls wholewheat flour
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic salt
pepper to taste

TOPPING
1 large tomato, thinly sliced
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine all the filling ingredients and spread in the cooked pastry case.
2 Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 14-16 minutes, or until set, rotating half a turn every 3 minutes.
3 Top with tomato slices and the remaining topping. Stand for 10 minutes.

Sources of non-meat protein

Grains and grain products*+, such as wheat, rye, oats, bread, flour, biscuits, pasta, oat cakes, breakfast cereals, muesli, semolina

Nuts and seeds*, including almonds, Brazils, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecans; also sesame, pumpkin and sunflower seeds

Pulses*, including kidney beans, peas, chick-peas, lentils, butter beans, soya beans and soya products (such as tofu)

Eggs and dairy foods, such as milk, yoghurt and cheese**

* These foods should be combined with another protein source
\+ Choose unrefined products, such as wholewheat flour and bread
** These products can be high in fat; choose low-fat varieties

Slimmer's notes

Take care over which cheeses you use in this recipe and you can have a substantial slimmer's lunch for six people. If you select the cheeses carefully you can cut down on the cholesterol value as well as the calories. Just use low-fat Cheddar cheese and omit the grated Parmesan cheese — and make the quiche for six. This gives a reasonable 295Cal / 1230kJ per wedge. Serve with green salad.

Spiced stuffed cabbage

15 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This makes a really satisfying yet light meal. Serve with a fresh tomato and onion salad.

1 green or white cabbage (weighing about 900g / 2lb)
150ml / ¼pt water
4 lemon wedges

STUFFING
1 tomato, seeded and chopped
45ml / 3tbls sliced spring onions
150g / 6oz brown rice, cooked
60ml / 4tbls flaked almonds, coarsely chopped
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground allspice
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger

SERVES 4

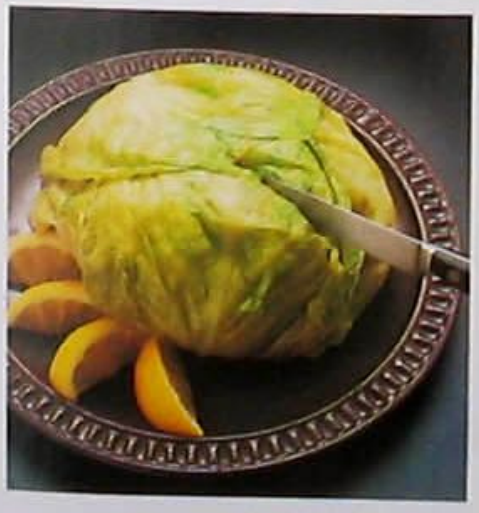
How to microwave Spiced stuffed cabbage

Put *the cabbage and water in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until outer leaves are pliable, rotating the dish half a turn once. Drain, then allow to cool slightly.*

Place *cabbage on two criss-crossed pieces of stretch wrap. Gently ease back pliable outer leaves. Cut out the inside of the cabbage, leaving outer leaves attached to stem. Chop about one-quarter of scooped out cabbage.*

Combine *the chopped cabbage, tomato and spring onions in the casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until cabbage is tender-crisp. Stir in the remaining stuffing, ingredients, mixing well.*

Transfer *cabbage shell to a deep bowl with the aid of the stretch wrap. Spoon stuffing into cabbage shell, and gently pull leaves to centre. Secure stretch wrap tightly around cabbage; prick twice.*



Microwave *at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until steam escapes when pierced in centre. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Cut the cabbage into wedges; serve with lemon wedges to squeeze over each portion.*

Spiced Stuffed Cabbage

Vegetable spaghetti

11 mins

Standing time: none

Serve a fresh green salad, tossed in a herby oil and vinegar dressing with this spaghetti dish.

350g / 12oz wholewheat spaghetti
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
450g / 1lb tomatoes, seeded and coarsely chopped
450g / 1lb mushrooms, quartered
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
pepper
100g / 4oz grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Cook the spaghetti conventionally. Drain and place in a large serving dish. Sprinkle with lemon juice and set aside.
2 Place the tomatoes, mushrooms, olive oil, basil and pepper into a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes or until the vegetables are tender, stirring once.
3 Stir in half the Parmesan cheese and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
4 Spoon the tomato and mushroom mixture over the spaghetti and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until completely heated through.
5 Serve with the remaining Parmesan cheese served separately.

Chick-pea casserole

13½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

575ml / 1pt boiling vegetable stock
225g / 8oz bulgar or cracked wheat
1 small green pepper, seeded and cut into 2.5cm / 1in chunks
1 small onion, thinly sliced
1 parsnip, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
400g / 15oz can chick-peas, rinsed and drained
300g / 10.6oz can tomato soup
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
1 courgette, thinly sliced
2.5ml / ½tsp dried rosemary
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the stock in a bowl and add the wheat. Cover and leave to soak for 30 minutes to soften and absorb the liquid; stir occasionally while soaking.
2 In a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, combine the green pepper, onion, parsnip and olive oil. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring once.
3 Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the wheat. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until vegetables are tender, stirring twice. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes to complete cooking.
4 Meanwhile, reheat the wheat, by microwaving at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Spoon the chick-pea mixture over the wheat.

Cook's notes

Cracked or bulgar wheat is very nutritious as the grain is left as near its natural state as possible. The wheat is cracked, then steamed and roasted, so it needs little or no cooking; just soak in boiling liquid before using. It is available from health food stores and some delicatessens.

Wholewheat macaroni cheese

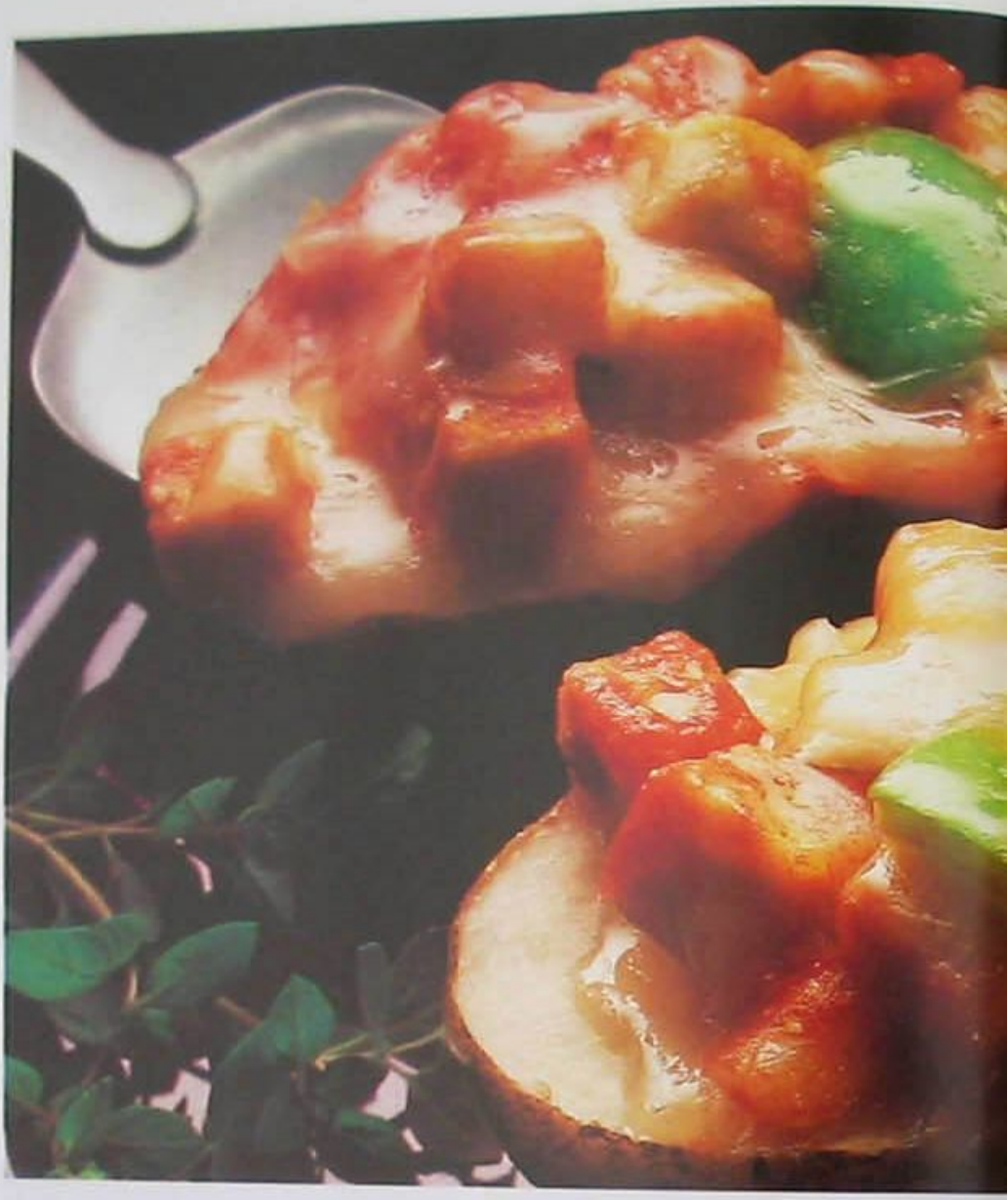
12½ mins

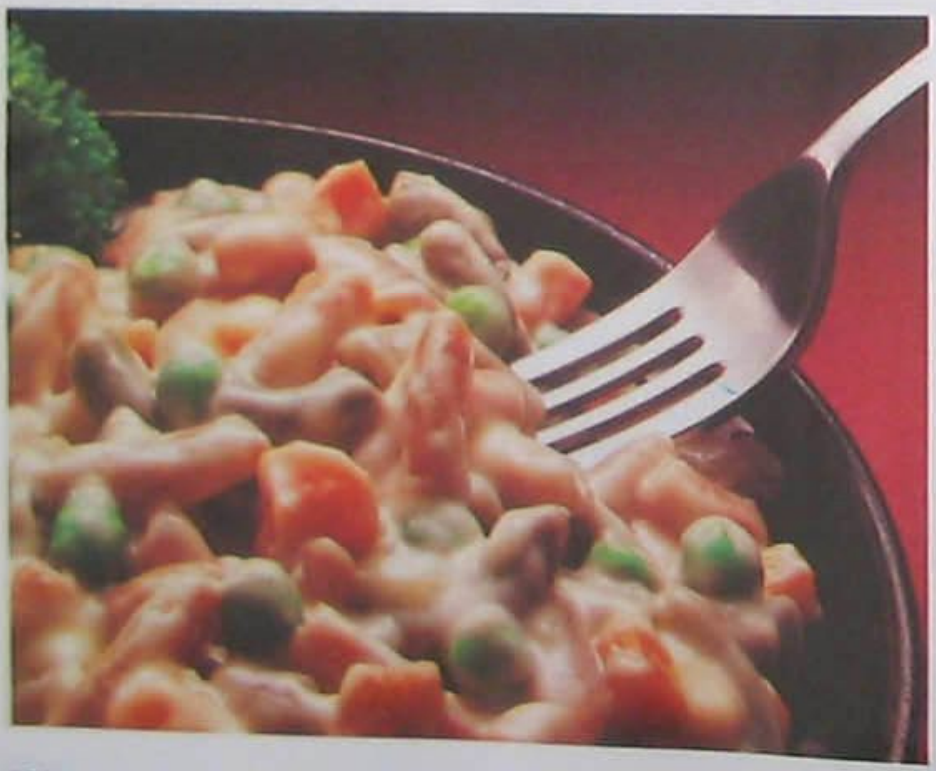
Standing time: none

225g / 8oz wholewheat macaroni
1 carrot, finely chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz polyunsaturated margarine
30ml / 2tbls wholewheat flour
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried tarragon
salt and pepper
275ml / ½pt skimmed milk
100g / 4oz frozen peas
200g / 7oz low-fat Cheddar cheese, crumbled
pinch of mustard powder

SERVES 4

1 Cook the macaroni conventionally as directed; drain.
2 Meanwhile, combine carrot, onion and margarine in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, until tender-crisp.
3 Stir in the flour, tarragon and seasoning, and blend in the skimmed milk; stir in the peas. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) for 6-7 minutes, or until thickened, stirring three times.
4 Add the cheese, mustard and macaroni. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-4 minutes.





Ratatouille potatoes

28 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

4 baking potatoes (about 225g / 8oz each)
2 aubergines, (about 450g / 1lb total weight), chopped
425g / 15oz can tomatoes
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into 2.5cm / 1in chunks
1 onion, chopped
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper
175g / 6oz Edam cheese, grated

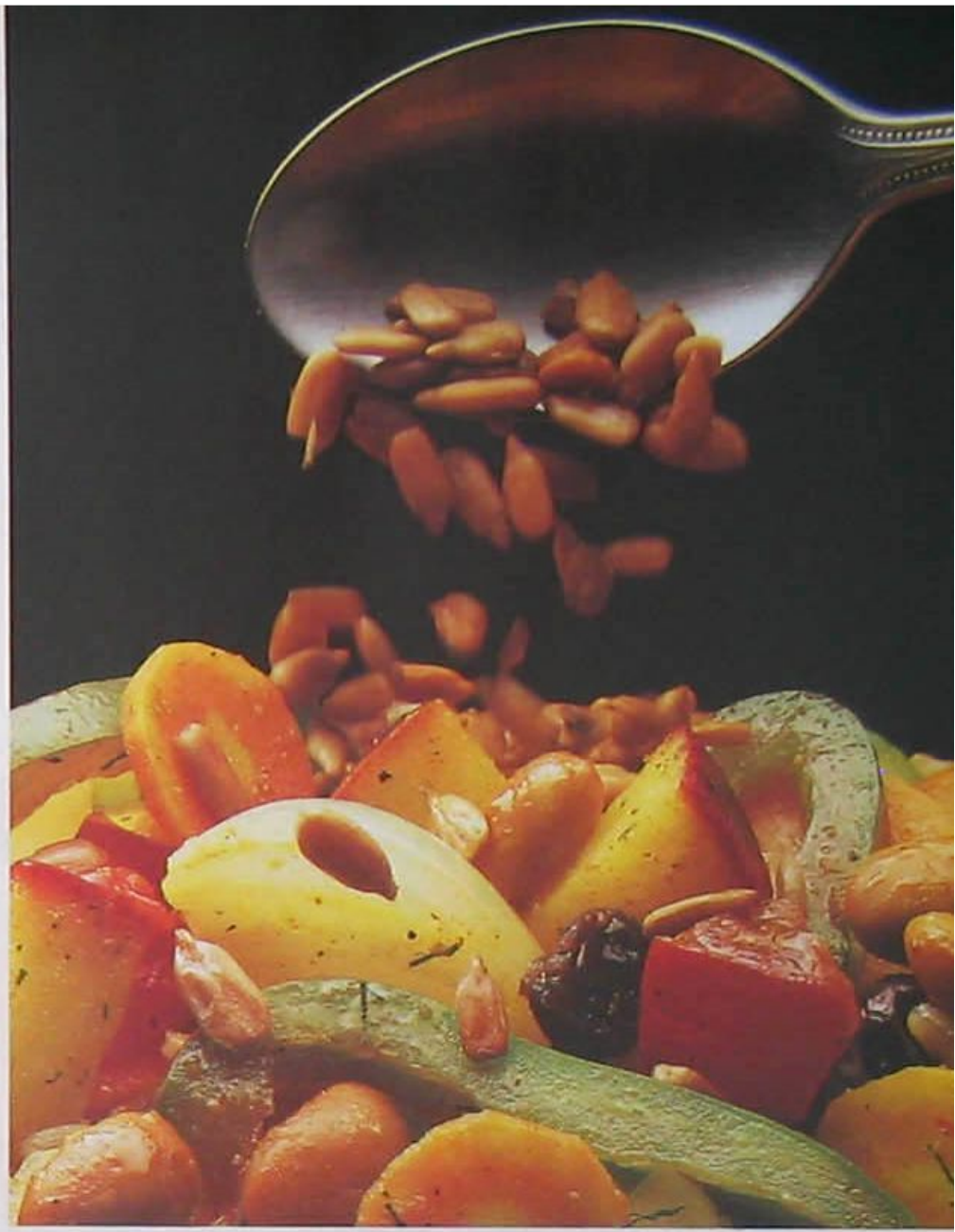
SERVES 4

Above: *Ratatouille Potatoes*
Left: *Wholewheat Macaroni Cheese*

1 Prick the potatoes well with a fork, then arrange in a circle on absorbent paper in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 11-12 minutes, or until just tender, turning over and rearranging once. Wrap each separately in foil and leave to stand for 15 minutes to cook through to the centre.

2 In a 3.4L / 6pt casserole, combine the remaining ingredients, except the cheese. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, or until the aubergine is just tender, stirring the mixture every 5 minutes.

3 Cut each potato in half lengthways. Place on a large serving plate and top with the ratatouille mixture. Sprinkle with the cheese and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3 minutes, or until the cheese is melted, rotating the dish a quarter turn every minute.



Vegetable curry

12 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, coarsely chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and cut in long, thin strips
1 red-skinned apple, cored and chopped
2 carrots, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
25g / 1oz polyunsaturated margarine
432g / 15.2oz can borlotti beans, rinsed and drained
1 tomato, chopped
37.5ml / 2½tbls raisins or sultanas
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
10ml / 2tsp mild curry powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried dillweed
salt and pepper

Vegetable Curry

TO SERVE
225g / 8oz brown rice, cooked
15ml / 1tbls toasted sunflower seeds

SERVES 4

1 In a 2.3L / 4pt casserole, combine the onion, green pepper, apple, carrots, garlic and margarine. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until the onion and carrots are tender, stirring every 2 minutes.

2 Add the remaining ingredients, except the rice and sunflower seeds; mix well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the dish is heated through and the flavours are well blended. Serve with the brown rice, and sprinkle with the sunflower seeds.

Fruit savarin

Feather-light cake soaked in a rich, boozy syrup, then filled with fresh soft fruit and whipped cream makes a mouth-watering combination of flavours and textures — and your microwave makes it fast and simple.

This fabulous cake is typically French — elegant and stunning. The mixture is a yeast batter enriched with eggs and butter to give a very soft, spongy texture. It is traditionally baked in a plain ring mould then soaked in a sugar or syrup to make it even more moist and appetizing.

Savarins are well suited to microwaving — in fact the cake is much softer and more moist than when baked conventionally. Also, ring moulds work particularly well in the microwave as they encourage even cooking. However, it is best to rise savarin batter conventionally, rather than in the microwave. (Its high fat and sugar content attract microwave energy strongly, which could cause it to start cooking.)

If liked, you can vary the liqueur used in the sugar syrup according to the type of fresh fruit you choose to fill the savarin. Use kirsch with cherries or pineapple, for example, or Cointreau or Grand Marnier with oranges.

The syrup-soaked cake can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 1-2 days. It can be served simply dusted with icing sugar or, as here, filled with cream and fruit. Either way it makes a sumptuous dessert or coffee time cake.

Fruit savarin

7¾ mins

Standing time: none

65ml / 2½fl oz milk
15ml / 3tsp dried yeast
10ml / 2tsp sugar
225g / 8oz strong plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
4 eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz butter, softened
grated zest of 1 orange

SYRUP
175g / 6oz sugar
150ml / ¼pt water
45ml / 3tbls apricot jam, sieved
45ml / 3tbls sherry or rum

DECORATION
275ml / ½pt double cream, whipped
fresh fruit in season
slivered almonds (optional)

SERVES 8-10

Cook's notes

The savarin will absorb the syrup best if it is poured over while still warm. Place the savarin on a wire rack with a plate underneath and spoon the syrup all over it. Syrup from the plate can be poured over the sponge again to saturate it completely.

RAY DUNN

How to microwave Fruit Savarin

Pour *the milk into a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, or until quite warm. Stir in the yeast with the sugar and blend until dissolved.*

Stir *30ml / 2tbls of the flour into the yeast mixture. Leave, covered, in a warm place for about 20 minutes or until frothy. Lightly grease a 23cm / 9in microwave ring mould.*

Mix *the rest of the flour with the salt, sugar, eggs, butter and orange zest in a large bowl. Stir in the frothy yeast mixture. Beat vigorously for 3-4 minutes.*

Pour *the yeast batter into the mould, cover and leave in a warm place for about 30-40 minutes, or until the batter has risen two-thirds of the way up the dish.*

Stand *dish on an inverted plate in cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5½ minutes, or until cake is just shrinking from sides of dish. Turn out on to a wire rack, to cool slightly.*

Mix *the sugar and water for the syrup in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until sugar has dissolved. Stir in the jam and sherry or rum.*

Spoon *syrup over top of savarin. Mix cream with most of fruit and pile into the centre. Spike top of savarin with almonds, if liked. Decorate with remaining fruit.*

Adapting a recipe: pot roasts

For a really satisfying and flavoursome all-in-one meal, a good old-fashioned pot roast is hard to beat — especially when you can make it the modern microwave way, in under an hour.

Microwaving pot roasts is a fast, fuss-free way of providing a complete meal, often in less than an hour. Conventional pot roasting cooks a joint of meat slowly, with a little liquid, in a tightly covered casserole. Microwaving does much the same but, even when the meat is cooked at a gentle 50% (Medium), the time is much reduced.

Microwaving pot roasts

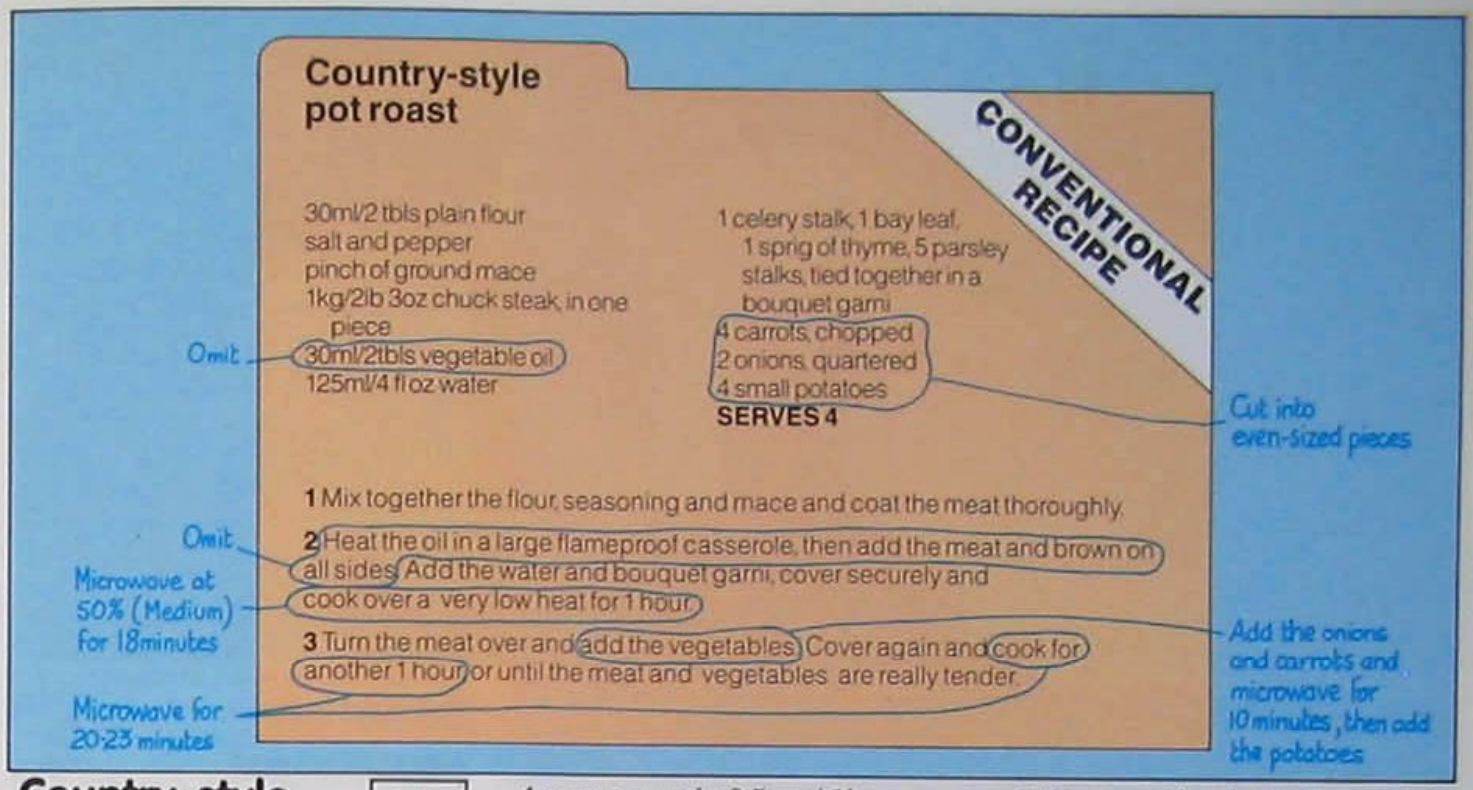
Meat: conventional pot roasting often uses less expensive cuts of meat and older, tougher poultry as these are tenderized by the lengthy cooking. Microwaving is a much faster cooking method however, so it is best to start with a more tender joint. Marinate the meat beforehand if it is at all tough, or if you want extra-succulent results. Pricking the meat with a fork before microwaving encourages it to absorb moisture and flavourings.

Vegetables: these help flavour the meat and the cooking liquid. They can be added to the pot at the beginning of cooking for really tender results, or part-way through microwaving if you prefer them crisp. Cutting in even-sized pieces and regular stirring ensures that they cook evenly.

Garlic, herbs and spices can all be added to the pot to give extra flavour to the finished dish.

Liquid: this can be stock, wine, cider or whatever is called for in the recipe. Less liquid is required than for conventional pot roasting, as there is less evaporation. You only need enough to make a tasty sauce or gravy.

Equipment: a microwave casserole with a securely fitting lid is ideal. Alternatively, you can use a roasting bag, although this is more fiddly if you wish to use the juices for a sauce. Tie the bag loosely (with a non-metallic tie), to allow the steam to escape.


Country-style pot roast
CONVENTIONAL RECIPE
30ml/2 tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
pinch of ground mace
1kg/2lb 3oz chuck steak, in one piece
30ml/2tbls vegetable oil
125ml/4 fl oz water
1 celery stalk, 1 bay leaf, 1 sprig of thyme, 5 parsley stalks, tied together in a bouquet garni
4 carrots, chopped
2 onions, quartered
4 small potatoes
SERVES 4
Omit
Cut into even-sized pieces
1 Mix together the flour, seasoning and mace and coat the meat thoroughly.
Omit
2 Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole, then add the meat and brown on all sides. Add the water and bouquet garni, cover securely and cook over a very low heat for 1 hour.
Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 18 minutes
3 Turn the meat over and add the vegetables. Cover again and cook for another 1 hour or until the meat and vegetables are really tender.
Add the onions and carrots and microwave for 10 minutes, then add the potatoes
Microwave for 20-23 minutes

Country-style pot roast

48 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1kg / 2lb 3oz chuck steak, in one piece
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
pinch of ground mace
1 celery stalk, 1 bay leaf, 1 sprig of thyme, 6 parsley stalks, tied together in a bouquet garni
125ml / 4fl oz water
4 carrots, cut in 2.5cm / 1in pieces
2 onions, cut in eighths
4 small potatoes, halved

SERVES 4

1 Prick the meat on all sides with a fork so that the moisture can penetrate. Mix the flour, seasoning and mace together and coat the meat thoroughly on all sides with the seasoned flour.

2 Put the bouquet garni into the bottom of a 2.5L / 4½pt casserole and place the meat on top. Add any remaining flour and the water.

3 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 18 minutes. Turn the meat over and add the chopped carrots and onions. Microwave for a further 10 minutes, then add the halved potatoes.

4 Continue to microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20-23 minutes, or until meat is tender. Give the dish a quarter turn and stir the vegetables every 5 minutes.

5 Remove the meat and tent with foil. Leave to stand for 10 minutes. Reheat vegetables and gravy at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Slice the meat and serve.

How to microwave Country-style pot roast

Coat *the meat with seasoned flour; place on top of bouquet garni in casserole. Add water and cover.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium), turning the meat over and adding the onions and carrots after 18 minutes, and the potatoes 10 minutes later. Continue to microwave until tender, then stand for 10 minutes.*

Stuffed veal roll

41 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

700g / 1½lb boned breasts of veal
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
2.5ml / ½tsp gravy browning
15ml / 1tbls cornflour
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

STUFFING
50g / 2oz fresh brown breadcrumbs
½ onion, finely chopped
½ celery stalk, finely chopped
15g / ½oz shredded suet
25g / 1oz sultanas
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
5ml / 1tsp dried tarragon
1 small egg, lightly beaten

MARINADE
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
5 peppercorns
5 parsley stalks, 1 bay leaf, 1 sprig thyme, tied together in a bouquet garni
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine

MIREPOIX
1 onion, cut into 6mm / ¼in dice
3 carrots, cut into 6mm / ¼in dice
3 celery stalks, cut into 6mm / ¼in dice

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the stuffing ingredients and spread over the surface of the meat. Roll up and tie in several places with string.

2 Combine marinade ingredients in a deep dish and add the meat. Marinate for at least 4 hours, turning occasionally. Remove meat and pat dry on absorbent paper.

3 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add oil and meat and sear.

4 Place the mirepoix vegetables in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Place the meat on top with the bouquet garni from the marinade. Strain the marinade liquid over the top.

5 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 30 minutes, turning the meat halfway through.

6 Remove the meat, tent with foil and leave to stand for 10 minutes. Strain the cooking liquid into a measuring jug and make up to 275ml / ½pt with cold water. Stir in the gravy browning.

7 Mix the cornflour with 30ml / 2tbls cold water and whisk into the liquid. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; stir every minute.

8 Slice the meat and arrange it on a serving dish. Mix the chopped parsley into the vegetables and arrange them around the meat. Serve with the gravy.

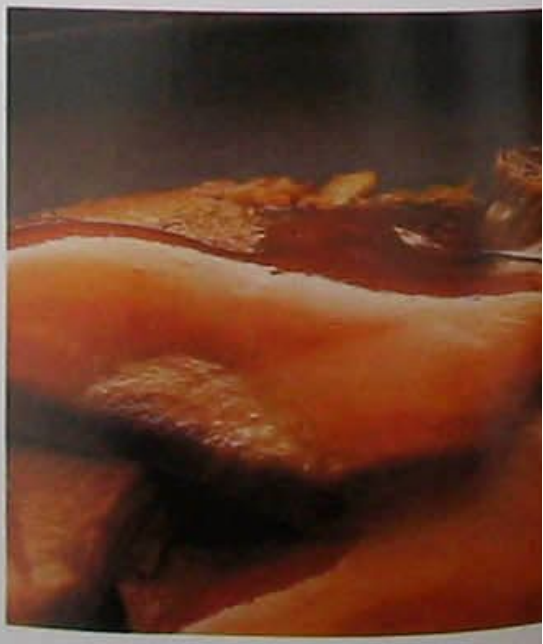
Sweet and sour tongue

76 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1kg / 2lb 3oz beef tongue, soaked overnight in cold water if cured in brine
275ml / ½pt hot water
2.5ml / ½tsp salt, if tongue is not cured in brine
6 black peppercorns
1 onion, sliced

SWEET AND SOUR SAUCE
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls cider or wine vinegar
125ml / 4fl oz water



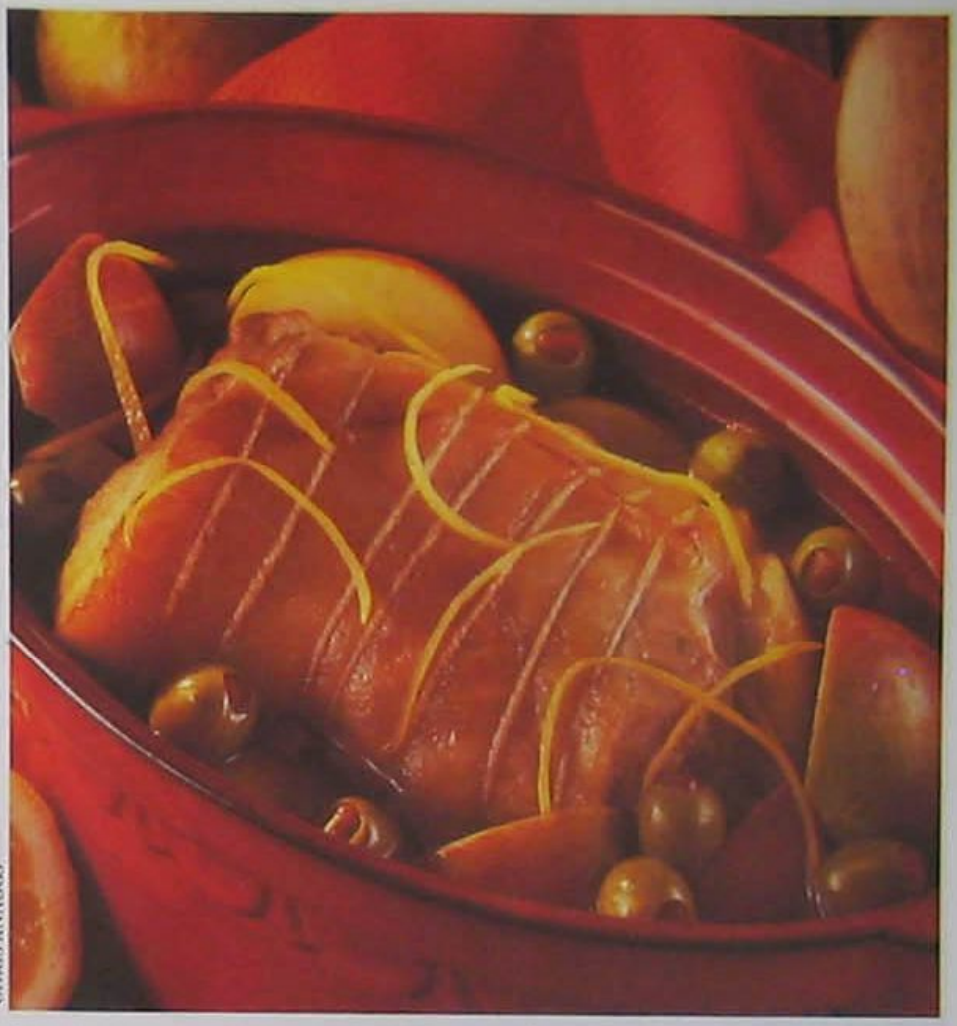
50ml / 2fl oz unsweetened pineapple juice
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup or sauce

SERVES 4-6

1 Wash and drain the tongue, then trim off fat and gristle. Place the tongue in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole with the water, salt (if using), peppercorns and onion.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) for 40 minutes.
3 Turn the tongue over. Cover and microwave for a further 30 minutes, or until tender when tested with a skewer.
4 Drain the tongue, then plunge into a bowl of cold water. When cool enough to handle, remove the skin with the point of a sharp knife. Discard the liquid.
5 Blend the cornflour with the vinegar, then whisk in the remaining sauce ingredients. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until thickened, stirring twice.
6 Cut the tongue into slices and arrange on a serving dish. Spoon the sauce over the top.

Cook's notes

A mirepoix is a combination of diced, cooked vegetables. In a pot roast or braise the meat is cooked on top of the vegetables and their purpose is to flavour the meat.



CHRIS KNAGGS

Pot roast of pork in cider

33 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

700g / 1½lb loin of pork, rind removed, boned and rolled
30ml / 2tbls honey
3 crisp dessert apples, peeled, cored and quartered
50g / 2oz pimiento-stuffed green olives
thinly pared zest of ½ lemon, cut in fine strips
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls water
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce

CIDER MARINADE
275ml / ½pt dry cider
6 fresh sage leaves, crushed
5 parsley stalks, bruised
1 onion, sliced
6 juniper berries, crushed
½ lemon, sliced

SERVES 4

Above: *Pot Roast of Pork with Cider*
Left: *Sweet and Sour Tongue*

1 Combine the marinade ingredients in a bowl and add the pork. Marinate for at least 8 hours in the refrigerator, turning occasionally.
2 Remove meat, pat dry with absorbent paper and brush with honey. Place in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole with 90ml / 6tbls marinade.
3 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30 minutes, turning the meat over halfway through cooking. Add the apples, olives and lemon zest after 20 minutes.
4 Remove meat, tent with foil and stand for 10 minutes. Strain cooking liquid into a jug, reserving apples, olives and lemon zest.
5 Blend the cornflour with the water and soy. Whisk into cooking liquid and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until it thickens, stirring every minute.
6 Cut the meat into thick slices and arrange on a serving plate. Garnish with apples, olives and lemon strips. Serve with the gravy.

Saucy Beef Pot Roast

Saucy beef pot roast

46 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

700-900g / 1½-2lb silverside of beef
3 carrots, sliced
2 onions, sliced
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls redcurrant jelly

MARINADE
1 lemon, sliced
2 bay leaves
6 whole cloves
2.5cm / 1in fresh root ginger, bruised
150ml / ¼pt red wine vinegar
1 large onion, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
about 1.1L / 2pt water, to cover

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine the marinade ingredients in a large dish. Add the meat and water to cover. Cover and leave to marinate in the refrigerator for 24 hours, turning the meat several times.

2 Discard the lemon slices, bay leaves and cloves. Transfer the meat with a slotted spoon to a 2.8L / 5pt casserole. Strain 150ml / ¼pt of the marinade over the meat. Reserve the marinade vegetables.

3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 40-45 minutes. Halfway through cooking, turn meat over and add the reserved vegetables and the carrots and onions.

4 Remove the meat from the casserole and tent with foil. Leave to stand for 10 minutes.

5 Strain the cooking liquid into a jug. Transfer the vegetables to a serving platter and keep them warm while you make the sauce.

6 Mix the cornflour with 30ml / 2tbls water and whisk into the cooking liquid in the jug. Stir in the redcurrant jelly and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring every minute.

7 Slice the meat thickly and arrange on the serving platter with the vegetables. Serve with sauce.

Savoury stuffed lamb

46 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Stuffing is a good way of making meat go further — and it looks elegant, too.

600g / 1¼lb boned breast of lamb
90ml / 6tbls water
30ml / 2tbls dry white wine
30ml / 2tbls plain flour

STUFFING
1 celery stalk, finey chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls fresh breadcrumbs
1 lamb's kidney, chopped
175g / 6oz pork sausagemeat
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp dried rosemary

SERVES 4-6

Cook's notes

To prevent the stuffing from spilling out and over-cooking, you can sew the edges of the stuffed lamb together, using fine string and a darning needle. After standing, simply pull out the string and carve the meat.

CHRIS KNAGGS

How to microwave Savoury stuffed lamb

Microwave *the celery, onion and butter for the stuffing at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients. Lay the lamb fat side down and spread stuffing over one half. Fold over and secure with cocktail sticks.*

Place *the meat in a shallow 25 × 20cm / 10 × 8in dish with the water and wine. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 40 minutes, turning over halfway through. Tent with foil and stand 10 minutes.*

Make *the cooking liquid up to 275ml / ½pt with cold water. Whisk the liquid into the flour in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring twice. Remove sticks, slice meat and serve with the gravy.*

Microwaving lobster

Lobster is utterly, unashamedly luxurious. If you want a meal that is sure to impress, choose an elegant lobster starter or main course, and use your microwave to speed your way to success.

Lobster has a unique flavour and firm but succulent texture. Although it takes some time to prepare, the effort is worthwhile. The microwave makes up for time used in preparation.

Choosing lobster

Lobster is available both fresh and frozen. A fishmonger will usually supply cooked fresh lobster, or will cook it to order so that it is ready to use. Frozen lobster is also ready-cooked and can be thawed in the microwave (see Freezer notes, page 1743).

Cooked lobster is bright red and should feel heavy for its size, have a pleasant smell and a springy tail — all signs that the lobster is fresh. Lobsters weighing 500g-1kg / 18oz-2½lb have the best flavour and texture. Larger lobsters are usually cheaper, but may be tough.

Preparing lobster

Removing the meat from a cooked lobster is not too difficult — but it does take a little time. A sharp knife or pair of kitchen scissors is essential, and a hammer, nut or lobster cracker, or even a rolling pin, is needed to crack the shell. Be sure to remove the thin, dark intestinal cord, as it is poisonous.

Serving lobster

Lobster has a slightly sweet flavour and succulent, meaty texture. Its flavour goes particularly well with brandy and sherry. For a really elegant meal, Lobster Thermidor is sure to impress, and in the microwave it is surprisingly easy to prepare. To make the lobster go further, choose the rich bisque (page 1743) or the sauce above.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use ½ cup of plain flour.

Lobster sauce

10½ mins

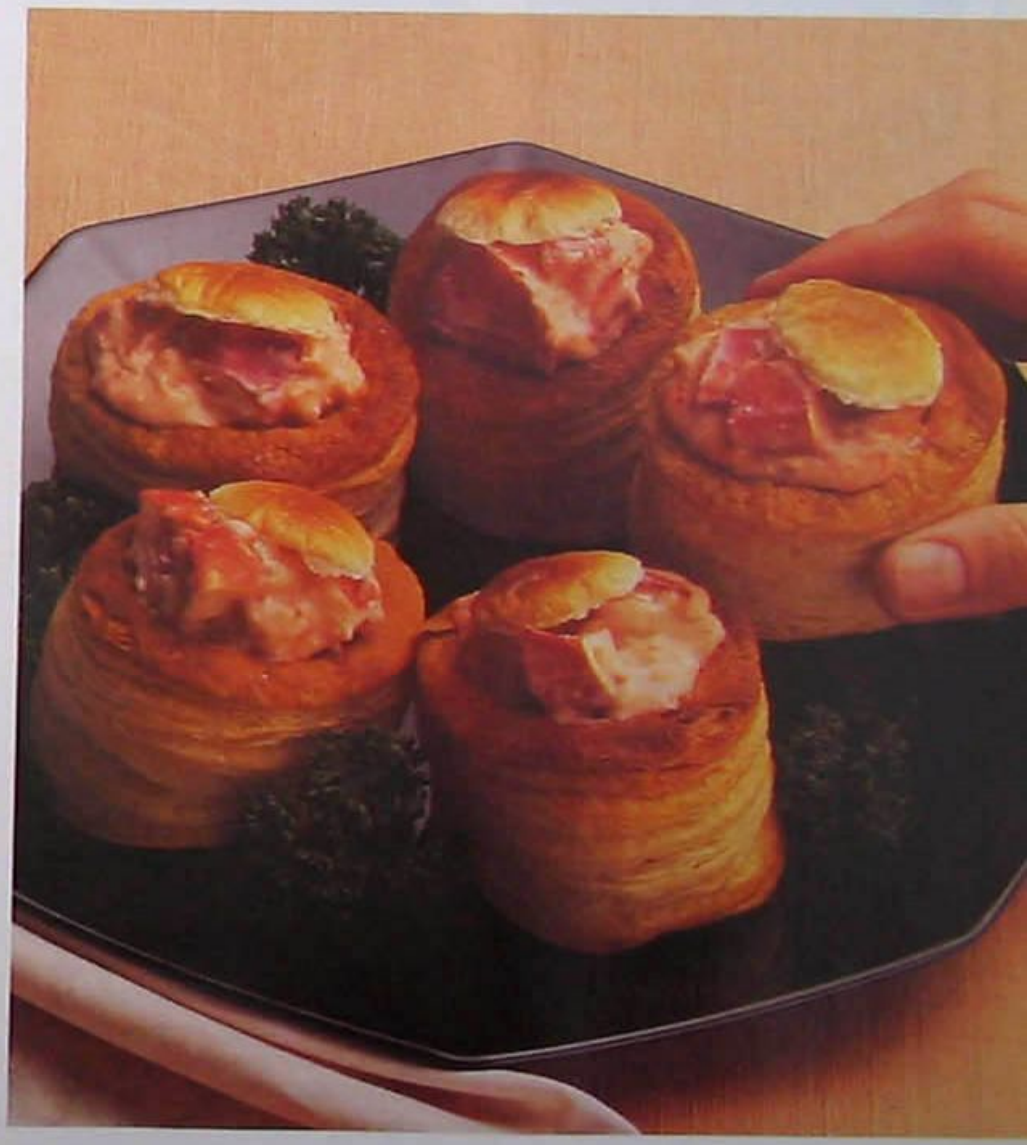
Standing time: 5 mins

Lobster sauce makes excellent use of a small amount of lobster. Use it to fill small brioches or vol-au-vent cases, or serve it with poached or grilled white fish fillets for an elegant luncheon.

1 lobster, weighing about 350g / 12oz, giving 150g / 5oz meat diced

BÉCHAMEL SAUCE
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
575ml / 1pt milk
1 bay leaf
50g / 2oz butter
50g / 2oz plain flour*
salt and pepper
pinch of ground nutmeg or mace
50g / 2oz Lobster butter (see recipe page 1743)
pinch each of cayenne and paprika

MAKES 575ml / 1pt SAUCE



Left: *Lobster Thermidor*
Right: *Lobster Vol-au-Vents*

1 Place onion, carrot, celery, milk and bay leaf in a 2L / 3½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until boiling. Stand 5 minutes.
2 Place butter in a 2L / 3½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until melted. Stir in flour. Strain the milk and blend it into the butter and flour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until thick, whisking twice.
3 Divide Lobster butter into four. Add one quarter at a time to the sauce, stirring well. Stir in diced lobster meat. Season to taste. Add cayenne and paprika to colour.
4 Microwave for 1½-2 minutes at 100% (High) to heat; stir twice.

Lobster thermidor

8½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 × 450g / 1lb cooked lobsters

30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
25g / 1oz grated Cheddar cheese
paprika

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter
5ml / 1tsp snipped chives
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
½ fish stock cube, (optional)
pepper
60ml / 4tbls single cream
60ml / 4tbls milk
1 egg yolk, lightly beaten
15ml / 1tbls dry sherry

SERVES 2

1 Hold lobster firmly and twist off all the claws. Crack the large claws, remove meat and reserve. Place lobster on a board, stomach side down. With a strong, sharp knife, cut off the head at the body joint.
2 Turn lobster over and cut away the thin underside of the shell with scissors or a sharp knife, exposing the meat. Shell second lobster.
3 Place lobster tails, meat side up, in a large shallow dish. Combine water and lemon juice and pour over tails. Cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at

How to prepare cooked lobster

Wipe *the lobster dry. Hold it firmly and twist off claws and legs. Set these aside. Place the lobster on a board, back uppermost, stretching out the head and tail.*

Split *lobster in half: cut down the centre of the back, from where head joins the body, to the tail with a strong sharp knife; turn lobster around and cut down centre of head.*

Discard *stomach sac, thin dark cord running down the back and spongy gills from top of head; save greyish meat to eat. Reserve the coral, if any, for Lobster Butter (page 1743).*

Lift *meat from shell to serve or for use in the recipes. Rinse the shell and use in Lobster Bisque, or arrange the meat in the shell halves and serve with melted butter.*

Crack *claw shells gently at the broadest point with a hammer, nutcracker, rolling pin or lobster cracker. Cut the cartilage between main claw and pincer; remove meat.*

Extract *the meat from the smaller joint of the claws, using a skewer or the handle of a small spoon. Gently crack the legs, then use a skewer to extract the meat.*

50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes, turning dish twice during cooking. Cover and stand for 5 minutes.
4 Remove meat from shells and add to reserved claw meat. (There should be about 400g / 14oz meat altogether). Cut into small pieces. Rinse shells, drain and set aside.
5 Place butter and chives in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until butter melts. Stir in flour, stock cube and pepper. Blend in cream and milk and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2½ minutes, or until thickened, stirring well every 30 seconds.
6 Spoon a little of the hot sauce into the egg yolk, blend, then add to the remaining sauce, stirring constantly. Add the sherry and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until thickened. Stir well. Mix in lobster meat.
7 Return lobster shells to the cleaned dish. Spoon lobster and sauce into shells. Sprinkle with cheese and paprika.
8 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3½-4½ minutes, or until cheese melts. Serve in the shells, garnished with parsley. Accompany with a crisp salad and crusty bread.

Cook's notes

The female (hen) lobster is more meaty than the male. It sometimes has roe which is called coral because it turns from black to red when cooked. The coral is prized for the beautiful rosy colour it gives to a dish in which it is included.

Freezer notes

To thaw frozen cooked lobster in the microwave, place it in a rectangular dish, and cover with vented stretch wrap. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 12-15 minutes per 450g / 1lb, giving dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Turn lobster over after 6 minutes. Remove when the shell is warm and the tail is flexible. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes to allow the centre to thaw.

Lobster bisque

28 mins

Standing time: none

This rich, cream soup, spiked with brandy, makes a stylish starter. When preparing it you will need the lobster shells and the coral, if available, as they provide additional flavour and colour.

1 hen lobster
1 carrot, sliced
1 onion, chopped
25g / 1oz butter
bouquet garni
30ml / 2tbls long-grain rice
5ml / 1tsp tomato purée or paste
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
1.1L / 2pt fish stock
150ml / ¼pt double cream
30ml / 2tbls brandy

SERVES 4

1 Remove meat from lobster (see steps, page 1742) and reserve shell and coral. (There should be about 150g / 5oz meat.)
2 Place carrot, onion, and butter in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole or tureen. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
3 Add bouquet garni, rice, tomato purée, wine, stock and lobster shell. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes. Reduce power to

70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 15 minutes.
4 Strain bisque, removing the shell and bouquet garni. Return the other ingredients to the casserole. Sieve the coral and stir into the liquid. Add most of the lobster meat to the bisque, reserving a little for garnish. Purée in a blender, then return to the casserole.
5 Stir in cream and reserved lobster. Microwave for 3-4 minutes at 100% (High), or until heated through. Stir in brandy and serve.

Lobster butter

10 secs

Standing time: none

unsalted butter
lobster coral, if available, or 5ml / 1tsp red lumpfish roe
salt and pepper

1 Remove coral and weigh it.
2 Weigh an equal amount of butter and place it in a small bowl. (If using lumpfish roe, use 15ml / 1tbls butter.) Cover and microwave at 30% (Low) for 10-45 seconds, or until soft; turn once.
3 Pound coral or roe to a paste. Add to butter; mix well. Season.
4 Press through a nylon sieve.

Sweet fun snacks

Snacks usually mean a raid on the fridge. With a little imagination and the help of your microwave you can turn storecupboard ingredients into a jolly snack or sweet treat.

When you want a sweet snack with a difference, turn to your microwave. There are all sorts of treats which can be concocted quickly in the microwave and chilled, if necessary, in the freezer for speed.

Try Fruitful Fondue the next time you have hoardes of hungry children to feed. They'll enjoy the fun of a fondue and the change from biscuits or sweets. Add a splash of brandy or Grand Marnier and you have a super dessert for an informal dinner party.

Amaretto Almonds are a sophisticated way to serve nuts at the end of a special meal. They would also make a lovely gift.

Peanut Snowballs are a unique combination of nuts and seeds that are nutritious as well as delicious.

Ice cream is always a favourite and is transformed in seconds in the microwave into a luscious thick shake. Use sorbet for a refreshing alternative to ice cream.

When you want a crisp and crunchy snack, toast fills the bill. Have a plateful of Spicy Toasts ready for the children when they come home from school.

Peachy Meringues make use of some of the egg white left over from the fondue and are a versatile quick snack or dessert.

And don't forget the dog — even he deserves a biscuit now and then and you can make them quickly in the microwave.

Fruitful Fondue

Fruitful fondue

4 mins

Standing time: none

4 large egg yolks
25g / 1oz caster sugar
175ml / 6fl oz orange juice
assorted prepared fruits to serve

SERVES 6-8

VARIATIONS

Serve the fondue with sponge cake cubes, sponge fingers, curled continental biscuits or brandy snaps for instant dippers.

For a sophisticated dinner party dessert, whisk 15-30ml / 1-2tbls orange liqueur or brandy into the cold, thickened fondue at the end of step 3, and serve immediately.

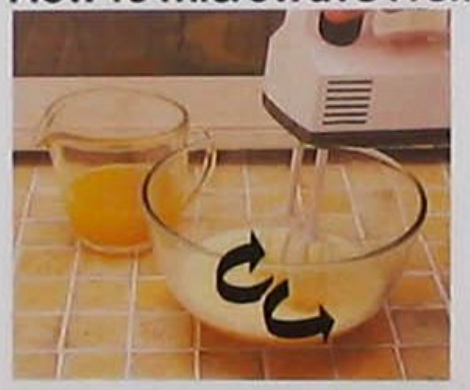
Cook's notes

Choose firm fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas, pineapple and peaches, cut into even-sized chunks for dippers. Whole, hulled strawberries are also suitable. Sprinkle fruit such as apples, bananas, peaches and pears with lemon juice as soon as they are cut to prevent them from discolouring.

Microtips

Do not leave the almonds unattended in the microwave as they can burn. Stir the nuts regularly and remove the dish from the microwave if they seem to overheat.

How to microwave Fruitful fondue

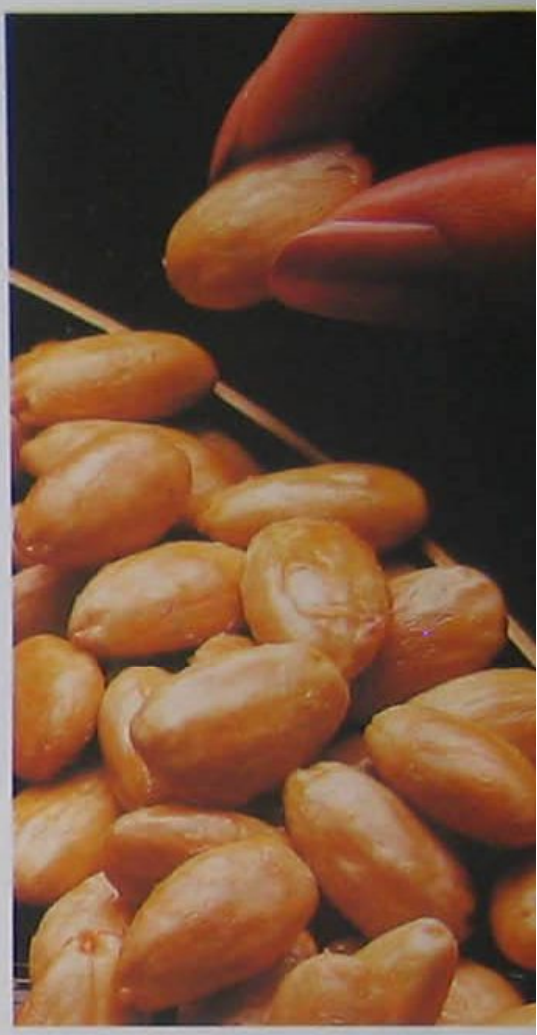


Place *egg yolks and sugar in a bowl and whisk together until light and creamy. Microwave the juice in a jug at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.*

Whisk *hot juice gradually into yolk mixture. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, whisking every 30 seconds.*

Pour *the fondue into a freezer-proof serving bowl. Cool, then chill for 10-15 minutes in the freezer, whisking every 5 minutes, until cold and thick.*

Place *the bowl of fondue in the centre of a large platter and surround it with the prepared fruits. Provide forks for spearing the fruits and dipping.*



Amaretto Almonds

Amaretto almonds

2½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Use these sweet treats to decorate fruit tarts or ice cream.

30ml / 2tbls Amaretto liqueur
50g / 2oz blanched almonds

MAKES 50g / 2oz

1 Pour the Amaretto into a baking dish. Add the almonds and stir until they are well coated.

2 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until the almonds are glazed and have a light golden brown colour, stirring after each minute.

3 Spread almonds out on a sheet of greaseproof or silicone paper, and stand for 5 minutes. Loosen from paper and leave to cool. Store in an airtight container.

Peanut snowballs

2 mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz peanut butter
75g / 3oz honey
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz dried milk powder
50g / 2oz sunflower seeds
50g / 2oz sesame seeds
50g / 2oz crushed cornflakes
50g / 2oz dried apricots, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
50g / 2oz shredded coconut

MAKES 30

1 Combine the peanut butter, honey and butter in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until butter melts and mixture can be stirred smooth.
2 Add milk powder, sunflower and sesame seeds, cornflakes, apricots and orange juice; mix well.
3 Shape into thirty walnut-sized balls and roll in coconut. Chill for about 3 hours until firm, or freeze for 5-10 minutes.

Right: *Quick Shake*
Below: *Peanut Snowballs*

Quick shake

1¼ mins

Standing time: none

Any sort of ice cream and syrup combination can be used for a Quick Shake. Strawberry or raspberry ripple make attractive and delicious alternatives to chocolate.

3 scoops vanilla, chocolate or chocolate chip ice cream
30ml / 2tbls milk
30ml / 2tbls chocolate syrup or sauce

SERVES 1

1 Place ice cream, milk and syrup in a 1.1L / 2pt jug.
2 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute. Whisk.
3 Microwave for a further 15-30 seconds, or until ice cream is just melted and the mixture is still thick. Serve immediately.

VARIATION
Lemon Maple Frappé is a tangy treat. Use lemon sorbet for the ice cream and maple syrup in place of the chocolate sauce. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute, whisk and serve immediately.

Spicy toasts

14 mins

Standing time: 20 mins

100g / 4oz butter
50g / 2oz caster sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
8 slices thick white bread, toasted and crust removed

MAKES 32

Dog biscuits

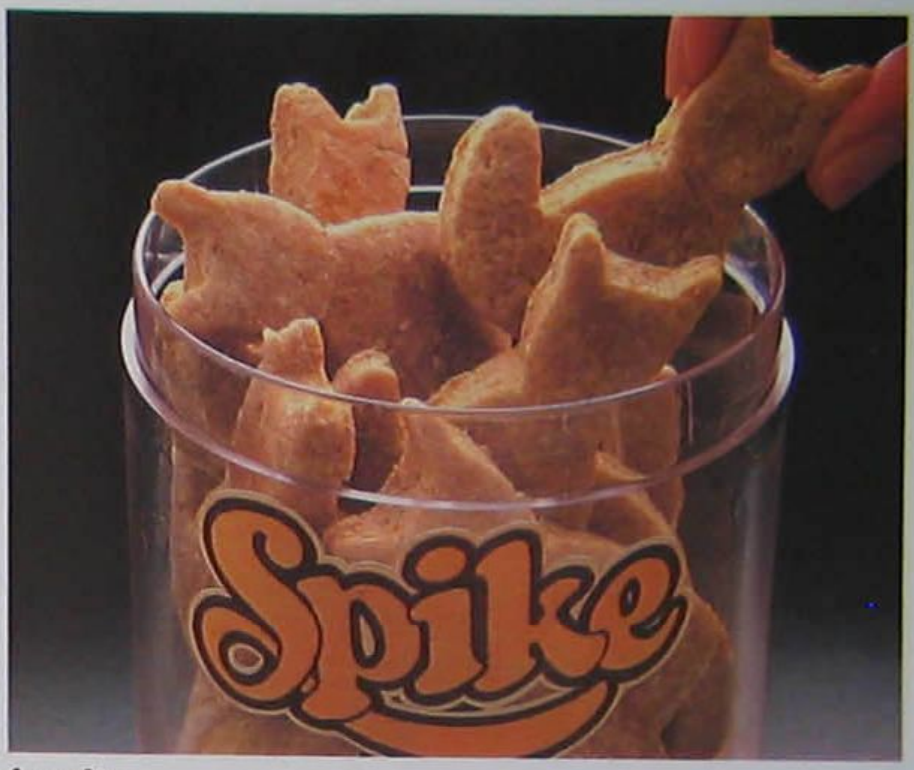
14 mins

Standing time: none

If you have a pet dog, why not let the children prepare a treat for him? Any shape cutter can be used, or just shape the dough by hand. The biscuits will keep for up to 2 weeks in an airtight container.

100g / 4oz wholewheat flour
50g / 2oz plain flour
75g / 3oz dried milk powder
75g / 3oz cornmeal
50g / 2oz rolled oats
5ml / 1tsp sugar
75g / 3oz lard, diced
1 egg, lightly beaten
150ml / ¼pt hot beef stock (made with ½ a cube)

MAKES 12-18



How to microwave Dog biscuits

Combine *flours, milk powder, cornmeal, oats and sugar in a large bowl. Cut or rub in lard until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.*

Add *the egg to the dry mixture and mix well. Pour stock slowly into the flour mixture. Mix well with a fork. Draw the mixture together to make a dough.*

Turn *out on to a floured surface; knead for 5 minutes, or until dough is smooth and elastic. Divide in half and roll out to 12mm / ½in thickness.*

Peachy meringues

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

10ml / 2tsp egg white, lightly beaten
100g / 4oz icing sugar, sifted
25g / 1oz butter
75g / 3oz ground almonds
10ml / 2tsp grated orange zest
15ml / 1tbls orange juice
25g / 1oz caster sugar
410g / 14½ oz can peach halves, drained
50g / 2oz plain chocolate, broken into pieces

SERVES 4

1 Place egg white in a small bowl. Gradually add icing sugar, mixing with a fork to a stiff mixture. Knead well by hand, working in more icing sugar, if necessary, until mixture is a smooth dough.

2 Form dough into eight small balls. Place in a circle on greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until risen and crisp. Stand the meringues for 5 minutes.

3 Place butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until melted. Beat in ground almonds, orange zest and juice and sugar.

4 Dry the peach halves on absorbent paper. Fill each one with a teaspoonful of the almond mixture. Arrange them in a circle on a plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until they are heated through.

5 Place chocolate in a small bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-2½ minutes, or until melted, stirring once.

6 Place a meringue on top of each peach half. Drizzle the chocolate over the meringues and serve.

Microtips

Meringues are a good way to use up extra egg whites and are easy to make in the microwave. Use 350g / 12oz icing sugar per egg white and follow the method given above to make 24 meringues. They will keep several weeks in an airtight box.

Cooking with yoghurt 1

Yoghurt is tops for versatility — a delicious dessert in its own right, it brings a refreshing tang to scones and breads, custards and cakes.

Gone are the days when yoghurt was only available in health food stores. Now every supermarket and corner shop sells a variety of flavours and types. The microwave helps turn this dairy product into all sorts of delicious dishes: this chapter covers sweet yoghurt recipes.

Yoghurt is a 'cultured' milk; it is made by incorporating the living culture present in all yoghurt into fresh milk, and encouraging it to grow by providing warmth.

A huge variety of commercial yoghurt is available, or you can make your own fruit flavoured yoghurt (see recipe page 1750). If you are watching your weight, choose low-fat varieties and those without added sugar. Always check the 'sell by' date before buying and follow the instructions for keeping.

MICROWAVING YOGHURT

With the help of the microwave, making yoghurt is a simple process. All you need is a large bowl and a microwave thermometer. The microwave method gives a very thick, creamy tasting result.

TYPES OF YOGHURT

Natural yoghurt has a tangy taste and thinnish texture. Some brands can be quite sharp. Yoghurts which are left to naturally 'set' in the carton, have a thicker texture. Use in cakes, scones and sauces.

Natural low-fat yoghurt is made from skimmed milk and is lower in calories and fat.

Strained yoghurt, which is deliciously rich, is increasingly popular. The yoghurt is left to drain, removing excess moisture, and leaving a thicker, concentrated mixture. It is an excellent substitute for cream, and lends its richness to many cooked desserts.

Goat's and sheep's milk yoghurt is a good substitute for those who are allergic to cow's milk. Use in the same way.

Flavoured yoghurt: fruit, nuts, muesli and chocolate can all be used to flavour yoghurt. Check the label for additives.

Fruit Flavoured Yoghurts

RAY DUNS

Peach yoghurt

12 mins

Standing time: none

Replace the peaches with drained, canned raspberries.

200g / 7oz low-fat dried skimmed milk powder
850ml / 1½pt water
75ml / 5tbls low-fat natural yoghurt
2 × 400g / 14oz can peaches in natural juice, drained and chopped
vanilla flavouring, to taste
caster sugar to serve (optional)

SERVES 8

Freezer notes

Freeze the Peach Yoghurt, in 150ml / ¼pt quantities, for up to 3 months. To thaw, microwave at 30% (Defrost) for 4-5 minutes, breaking up and stirring after 3 minutes. Stand for 2-3 minutes. Alternatively, thaw at room temperature for 4-5 hours.

Slimmer's notes

Served without sugar, this fruity yoghurt has only 120Cal / 505kJ per serving. It's good for breakfast, snacks or dessert.

How to microwave Peach yoghurt

Put *the dried milk into a 2.3L / 4pt bowl and whisk in water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 11-14 minutes, or until temperature reaches 88°C / 190°F on a conventional thermometer. Stir once. Cool to 50°C / 120°F.*

Stir *in the natural yoghurt and blend well. Cover the dish with stretch wrap and insert a microwave thermometer through the wrap into the milk. Place the bowl in the microwave and leave undisturbed for 2-4 hours.*

Check *the temperature every 30 minutes without moving the dish. If the temperature falls below 50°C / 120°F, microwave at 30% (Low) for ½-2 minutes, or until the temperature returns to that level.*

Continue *until the yoghurt appears set, remove the thermometer and chill for 2-3 hours. Stir in the fruit and vanilla flavouring to taste. Cover and store in the refrigerator; use within 4-5 days. Serve with caster sugar, if liked.*

Tangy banana teabread

13 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This sweet bread is delicious served warm or cold in thick slices, and buttered.

60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
2 small bananas, lightly mashed
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
65g / 2½oz butter or margarine, softened
100g / 4oz soft light brown sugar
1 egg, lightly beaten
75g / 3oz chopped dates

MAKES 8-10 SLICES

1 Grease and base-line a 900g / 2lb loaf dish with greaseproof paper or line the dish with stretch wrap.
2 Place the bananas in a small bowl. Beat in the yoghurt until the mixture is smooth.
3 Sift together the flour, salt and bicarbonate of soda. Add the butter, sugar, egg and yoghurt mixture. Beat for 30 seconds with an electric whisk to form a smooth batter. Stir in the dates. Pour into the prepared dish.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2½ minutes.
5 Increase the power to 100% (High) and cook for a further 3-5 minutes, or until the bread is well risen and just beginning to shrink from the sides of the dish. Leave to stand for 10 minutes before turning out.

VARIATION
Raisins, sultanas or chopped nuts could be substituted for the dates. Try using hazelnut instead of natural yoghurt.

Microtips

Tangy Banana Teabread stores well for up to 5 days in an airtight container. To serve warm, microwave 2 slices at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds.

Yoghurt scone round

5 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Serve the wedges warm or as soon as they are cold, split and filled with jam and Greek yoghurt.

275g / 10oz self-raising flour
a large pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
50g / 2oz butter, diced
30ml / 2tbls honey
50g / 2oz sultanas
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
150ml / ¼pt goats milk yoghurt or natural yoghurt

SERVES 8

1 Sift together the flour, salt and baking powder. Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

2 Add the honey, sultanas, cinnamon and yoghurt and mix to a soft dough. Knead lightly on a floured surface, then pat out to a round about 20mm / ¾in thick.

3 Place on a greased baking tray and score into 8 wedges. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until well risen and dry to the touch. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

4 Brown the top under a hot grill, if wished, before serving.

VARIATION

Add 50g / 2oz chopped pressed dates or mixed chopped nuts instead of the sultanas, if wished.

Right: *Pears With Muesli Yoghurt*
Below: *Yoghurt Scone Round*

CLINT BROWN

CLINT BROWN

Pears with muesli yoghurt

8 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

4 pears
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls soft light brown sugar

SAUCE

275ml / ½pt muesli yoghurt
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
90ml / 6tbls toasted chopped nuts

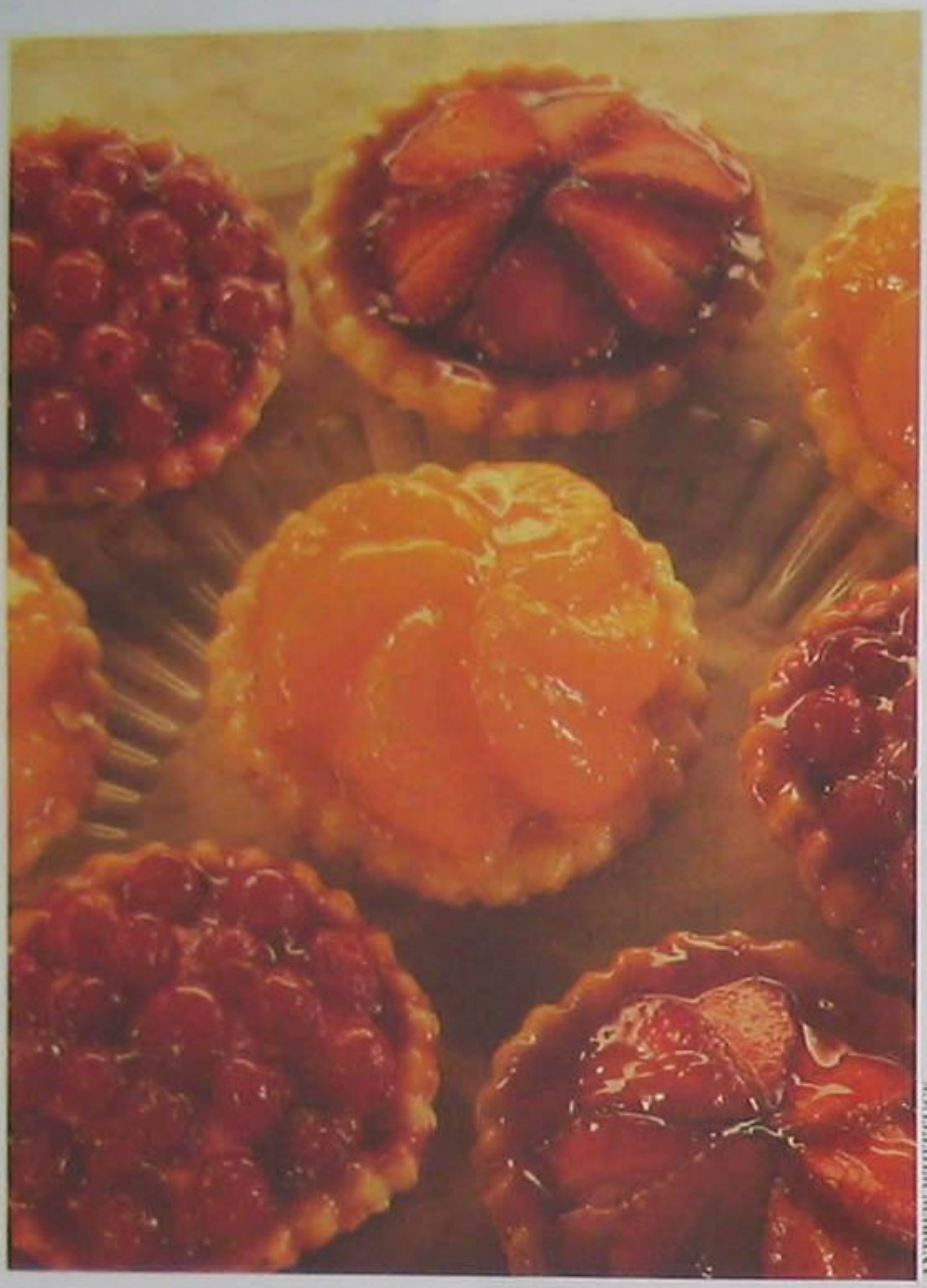
SERVES 4

1 Score the pears around the middle to stop the skins splitting during microwaving, and place in a round shallow dish. Dot with butter and sprinkle with sugar.

2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-10 minutes, basting and rearranging twice during cooking. (Very ripe pears will take the shorter time to cook.) Transfer the pears to a warm serving dish using a slotted spoon. Cover and leave to stand while making the sauce.

3 Whisk the yoghurt and cornflour into the buttery cooking liquid. Microwave for 2-3 minutes, whisking every 30 seconds, until thickened and smooth.

4 Pour the hot sauce over the pears. Sprinkle with the toasted nuts and serve immediately.



ANDREW WHITTUCK

Fruit tartlets

8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour
100g / 4oz butter
75g / 3oz ground hazelnuts
75g / 3oz caster sugar
1 egg, plus 1 egg yolk
Easy yoghurt custard, see recipe

TOPPING
100g / 4oz strawberries, hulled and quartered
75g / 3oz redcurrants
100g / 4oz redcurrant jelly
30ml / 2tbls water

MAKES 18

Above: *Fruit Tartlets*
Right: *Rich Yoghurt Cherry Pie*

1 Process the flour, butter, hazelnuts, sugar and egg to a firm dough. Alternatively, work ingredients to a dough by hand.
2 Knead lightly on a floured surface. Roll out thinly and use a 7.5cm / 3in fluted cutter to cut 18 circles. Place the pastry in paper cake cases, moulding them into tartlet shapes.
3 Microwave six cases at a time at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, turning once, until pastry is cooked. Watch carefully for the last minute and do not allow to brown in the centre. Stand for 3 minutes, then turn out and cool.
4 Spoon the yoghurt custard into the cases and top half with strawberries and half with redcurrants.
5 Microwave jelly and water at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring once. Cool, then brush over fruit and pastry. Leave to set.

VARIATION
Use 2 × 312g / 11oz cans drained mandarin oranges and 100g / 4oz sieved apricot jam, instead.

Easy yoghurt custard

7 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls cornflour
275ml / ½pt natural set yoghurt
2 egg yolks
15g / ½oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 300ml / 11fl oz

1 Whisk sugar and cornflour into yoghurt. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, whisking every minute. Continue microwaving for 2 minutes, whisking every 30 seconds.
2 Whisk the egg yolks in a separate bowl. Whisk a little hot yoghurt into the yolks, then whisk back into the thickened yoghurt.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes, whisking every 30 seconds, until thickened. Whisk in butter and vanilla. Cool.

Rich yoghurt cherry pie

9 mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

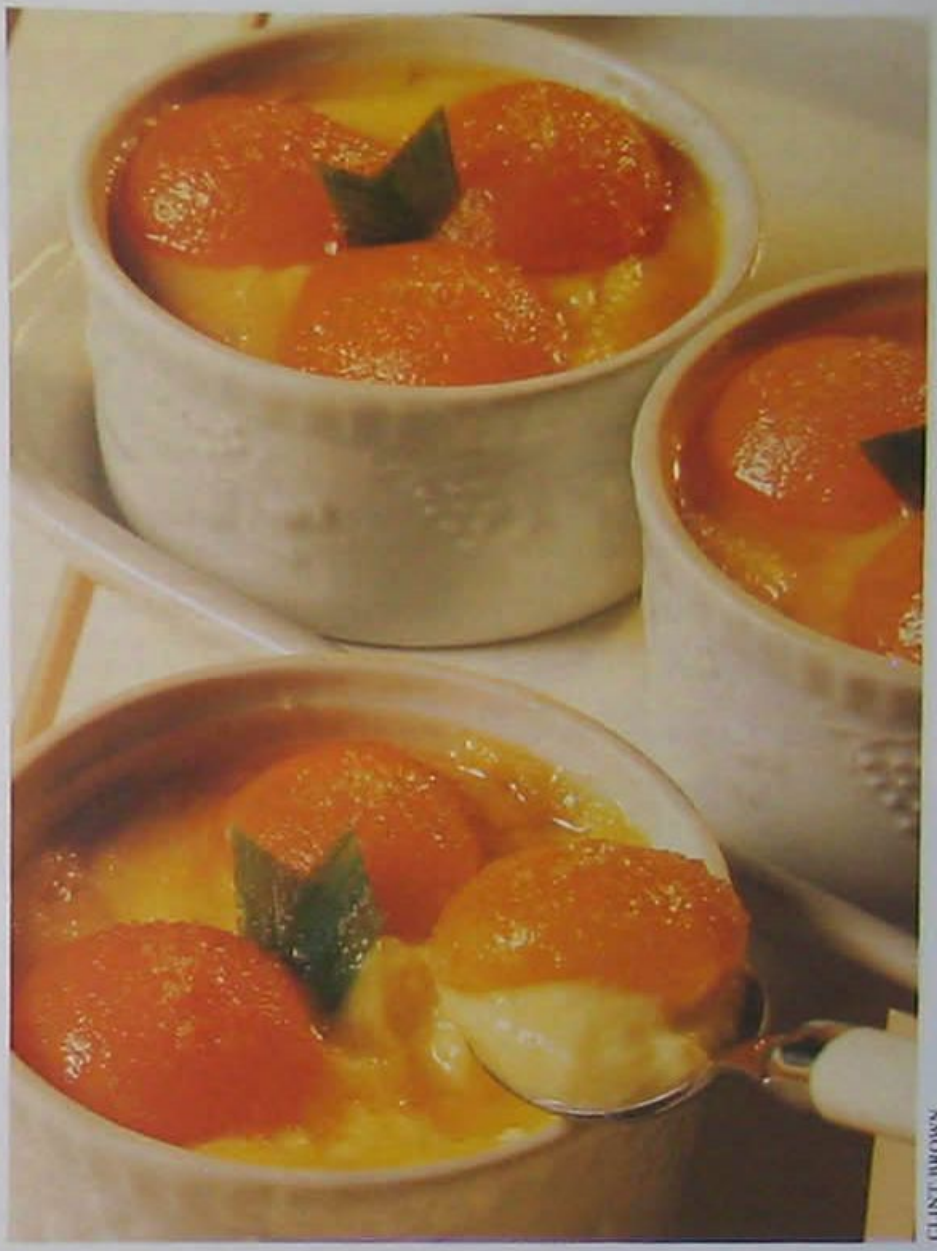
FILLING

225g / 8oz strained Greek yoghurt
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream
45ml / 3tbls cornflour
50g / 2oz soft light brown sugar
4 eggs
425g / 15oz can red cherries, stoned and drained
15ml / 1tbls kirsch

SERVES 6

1 Whisk together yoghurt, cream and cornflour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Whisking every minute.
2 Place the sugar in a separate bowl and add 2 eggs and 2 egg yolks. Reserve the whites. Whisk the sugar and yolks until frothy. Whisk in a little of the hot yoghurt, then whisk into the yoghurt.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes, or until very thick, whisking every 30 seconds. Stir in the kirsch.
4 Place the cherries in the base of the pastry case. Whisk the egg whites to soft peaks; fold into mix.
5 Pour into the pastry case and smooth the surface. Brown under the grill, cool then chill.

ANDREW WHITTUCK



CLINT BROWN

Yoghurt Custard With Apricots

Yoghurt custard with apricots

10 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

275ml / ½pt strained Greek yoghurt
50ml / 2fl oz whipping cream
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
4 eggs
75g / 3oz caster sugar
grated zest of 1 orange

TOPPING

425g / 15oz can apricot halves, drained
30ml / 2tbls Demerara sugar

SERVES 6

1 In a large bowl, whisk together the yoghurt, cream and cornflour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; whisk every 30 seconds.
2 In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs, sugar and orange zest together until foamy, then add the hot yoghurt mixture in a thin stream, whisking continuously.
3 Strain custard into six ramekins and arrange in a circle in the microwave. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes, until still creamy and just beginning to set, rearranging three times during cooking. Leave to stand for 3 minutes, place three apricot halves on top of each custard. Sprinkle with Demerara sugar and place under a hot grill to brown.

Continental breads 2

With the microwave you can enjoy the enticing aroma and unbeatable flavour of freshly baked bread rolls — without the hours or preparation required for conventional baking.

If you have developed a taste for Continental Breads (see Part 36, page 980), why not try your hand at some more mouth-watering European recipes?

With a microwave, you no longer have to decide days in advance to bake. The microwave can be used to rise and prove the dough, so that you have time on your hands, not flour.

Basic rules for rising, proving and cooking bread in the microwave are covered in Part 12, page 312. Remember, however, that care is essential so that the yeast is not killed by overheating, or that the dough begins to cook. Give the dough just a few minutes in the microwave, then let it stand 15 minutes before putting back.

Although microwaved breads do not brown during cooking, recipes that call for dark flour, syrup or treacle produce a browner surface. A sprinkling of wheatgerm, seeds or crushed grains also enhances the finish of bread or rolls.

The bread or rolls in these recipes are best eaten fresh, but any left over can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days.

Microtips

To rise bread dough in a microwave you need a microwave with variable power. The low temperature and power are necessary because otherwise the dough will start to cook before rising.

Pumpernickel Ring Loaf

Pumpernickel ring loaf

28 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

15ml / 3tsp dried yeast
125ml / 4fl oz warm water
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar
175g / 6oz mashed potato
175ml / 6fl oz mashed potato
175ml / 6fl oz black treacle
50g / 2oz lard or cooking margarine, melted
5ml / 1tsp caraway seeds
5ml / 1tsp salt
100g / 4oz rye flour
175g / 6oz strong white flour
100g / 4oz wholewheat flour plus 45ml / 3tbls
45ml / 3tbls cornmeal
15ml / 1tbls margarine, melted

MAKES 1 LOAF

1 Sprinkle the yeast over the warm water and stir in the caster sugar. Leave for about 10-15 minutes, or until frothy.
2 In a large bowl, mix together the mashed potato, treacle, lard, caraway seeds, salt and yeast mixture. Gradually stir in the rye flour, strong white flour and 100g / 4oz of the wholewheat flour to form a very stiff dough.
3 Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for about 8 minutes. Place the dough in a greased large bowl and cover.
4 Leave the dough for several hours in a warm place, until doubled in size, or rise in a microwave: set the bowl in a dish of hot water. Microwave at 10% (Low) for only 4 minutes at a time. Leave to stand for 15 minutes between each rise and repeat until the dough is twice its original size.
5 Punch the dough down and shape into a ball. Cover and leave to rest for 15 minutes. Mix the remaining wholewheat flour and cornmeal together and sprinkle some over a greased 25cm / 10in pie dish.
6 Shape the dough into a 38cm / 15in long sausage. Brush the roll with the melted margarine, then coat with the remaining flour and cornmeal mixture. Form into a ring, then prove and cook as below. When the ring loaf is done, allow to cool completely before serving.

Nutrition notes

Rye flour is dark and heavy-textured, and one of the least refined and healthiest flours available. When used in yeast breads, it is usually combined with some other flour to lighten the texture.

Cook's notes

The new easy-blend yeast now available can be used instead of the traditional dried yeast in these recipes. Do not reconstitute easy-blend dried yeast in liquid, but simply stir it into the dry ingredients before adding liquid. A 7g / ¼oz sachet is equivalent to 7.5ml / 1½tsp of dried yeast, or 15g / ½oz of fresh yeast. Once opened, it is preferable to use a whole sachet, although it will keep for up to 2 weeks.

How to microwave pumpernickel

Shape *the dough into a ring and place it in a pie dish. Pinch the ends together. Place a greased glass, open-end up, in the centre of the dish.*

Cover *the dough with stretch wrap and prove it in a microwave (see stage 4, above), or leave it in a warm place for about 1 hour.*

Uncover *the dough and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the plate a quarter turn after 3 minutes. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for another 2-7 minutes, or until the bread is cooked, rotating the plate a quarter turn every 2 minutes.*

Test *the bread by pressing lightly in several places — the top should spring back. Stand 10 minutes, then cool on a rack.*

Continental Cheese Rolls

Continental cheese rolls

8 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity of Basic Rich Bread dough (see Part 12, page 310), risen and rested
100g / 4oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
50g / 2oz cream crackers, crushed
50g / 2oz dry brown breadcrumbs
50g / 2oz butter, melted

MAKES 20 ROLLS

1 Divide the dough in half. On a floured surface, roll out each piece into a 25cm / 10in square.
2 Sprinkle each square with half the grated cheese, then with 30ml / 2tbls of the crushed crackers. Combine the remaining cracker crumbs and breadcrumbs.
3 Roll up each piece of dough like a Swiss roll. Cut each roll into ten 2.5cm / 1in slices. Brush both surfaces with butter, then coat with the mixed crumbs.
4 Place 10 rolls, cut-side down, in a circle on a 25cm / 10in plate. Repeat with the remaining rolls.
5 Cover each plate of dough with greaseproof paper and rise by microwave. Set one plate in a dish of hot water and microwave at 10% (Low) for only 2 minutes at a time. Leave to stand for 15 minutes between each rise. Sprinkle with remaining crumbs. Repeat with the other plate.
6 Microwave one plate at a time at 50% (Medium) for 4-8 minutes, or until the tops of the rolls spring back when touched lightly, rotating the plate a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Serve warm or cold, with butter.

Seed loaf

32½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz rye flour
125ml / 4fl oz molasses or black treacle
50g / 2oz white cooking fat or cooking margarine, melted
5ml / 1tsp salt
15ml / 3tsp dried yeast
225ml / 8fl oz warm water
30ml / 2tbls caraway seeds
350g / 12oz strong plain flour
rolled oats, to coat
1 egg, beaten, for brushing

MAKES 1 LARGE LOAF

1 Mix the rye flour, molasses or treacle, fat and salt together in a large bowl. Sprinkle the dried yeast over the warm water in a small jug and leave in a warm place for about 15 minutes, or until frothy. Stir the yeast mixture and the caraway seeds into the rye flour mixture. Gradually work in the strong plain flour, to make a very stiff dough.
2 Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for about 8 minutes, or until smooth. Place in a greased bowl and flour the top.
3 Cover with vented stretch wrap or greaseproof paper and microwave at 10% (Warm) for 4 minutes. Leave to stand for 15 minutes. Repeat twice, or until dough has nearly doubled in size.
4 Punch down dough and shape into a ball. Cover and leave to stand for 10 minutes.
5 Grease a 23cm / 9in ring mould and scatter with oat flakes. Shape the dough into a 38cm / 15in roll and brush all over with beaten egg, then coat with rolled oats. Shape into a ring, pinch the ends firmly together and place in the prepared ring mould. Repeat step 3.
6 Uncover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving mould a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Increase power to 100% (High) and cook for 2½-6 minutes or until springy to the touch, giving dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes.
7 Allow to stand for 10 minutes, then turn out on to a rack to cool.

Cook's notes

Any honey, warmed gently, can be substituted for the golden syrup in this recipe if preferred.

Microtips

To keep microwaved breads at their freshest, they should be wrapped and kept in the refrigerator. After two or three days, however, they may need refreshing. With the seed loaf, wrap two slices at a time in absorbent paper and microwave for 30 seconds at 30%.

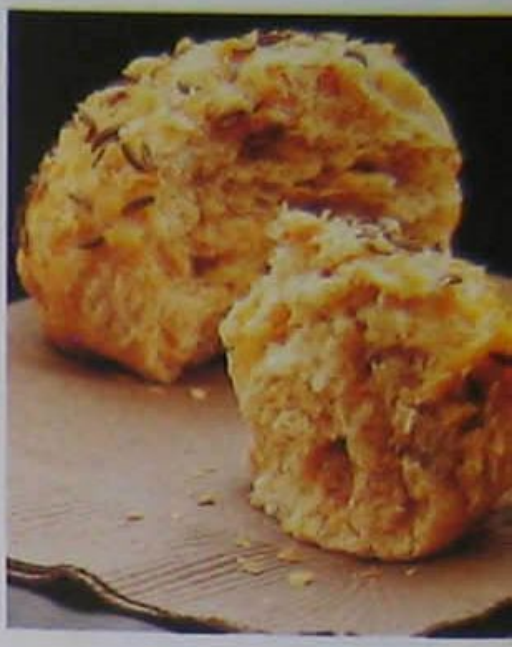
Sweet caraway rolls

10 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

100g / 4oz bran breakfast cereal
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls golden syrup
5ml / 1tsp caraway seeds
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
175ml / 6fl oz boiling water
5ml / 1tsp dried yeast
45ml / 3tbls warm water
225g / 8oz plain flour
10ml / 2tsp wheatgerm
10ml / 2tsp milk

MAKES 24 ROLLS



How to microwave Caraway rolls

Blend *the bran, oil, golden syrup, orange zest, ½tsp caraway seeds, salt and boiling water in a bowl. Mix together well, then leave the mixture to cool until warm.*

Dissolve *yeast in warm water. Leave for about 10 minutes until frothy. Stir into bran mixture. Add flour and stir to make a stiff dough. Knead on a floured surface for about 8 minutes.*

Form *the dough into a ball; place in a lightly greased bowl. Cover loosely and leave in a warm place for ¾-1¼ hours, or until dough has doubled in size. Punch down the dough.*

Divide *into 24 pieces and shape into balls. Mix remaining caraway seeds with the wheatgerm. Put the milk in a bowl. Dip tops of rolls in milk, then in wheatgerm mixture.*

Arrange *rolls on two 25cm / 10in pie dishes lined with absorbent paper. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper. Leave to rise in a warm place for ¾-1¼ hours or until doubled in size.*

Microwave, *one plate at a time, at 50% (Medium) for 5-8 minutes, or until tops spring back when lightly pressed; rotate the dish a quarter turn twice. Stand for 2-3 minutes.*

Exotic meal for 4

This exciting menu is a rich feast of colours and flavours. Each dish is a work of art, yet surprisingly simple to prepare, and the Countdown helps you put them together with ease.

A microwave cuts down the cooking time needed for your ingredients, so that you can produce a wonderful meal in minutes.

This menu, however, requires a certain amount of attention between courses, which is why the Countdown is extremely useful.

You can plan your entries and exits from the kitchen so that the exotic dishes appear with the minimum of fuss. This meal is best served at an informal gathering.

The benefit of advance planning is that you can use recipes that call for a marinade, as in the kebabs here. Cubes of sirloin steak are immersed in a mixture of lemon and tomato juices, with Worcestershire, soy and hot pepper sauces for extra 'kick'.

Prepare several batches of pancakes for freezing, so that you have a supply for impromptu entertaining.

The final dish of poached fruits is a stunning swirl of orange, green and yellow; it can be prepared during the day and chilled.

Party Beef Kebabs and Fruits with Apricot Sauce

Spicy brown rice

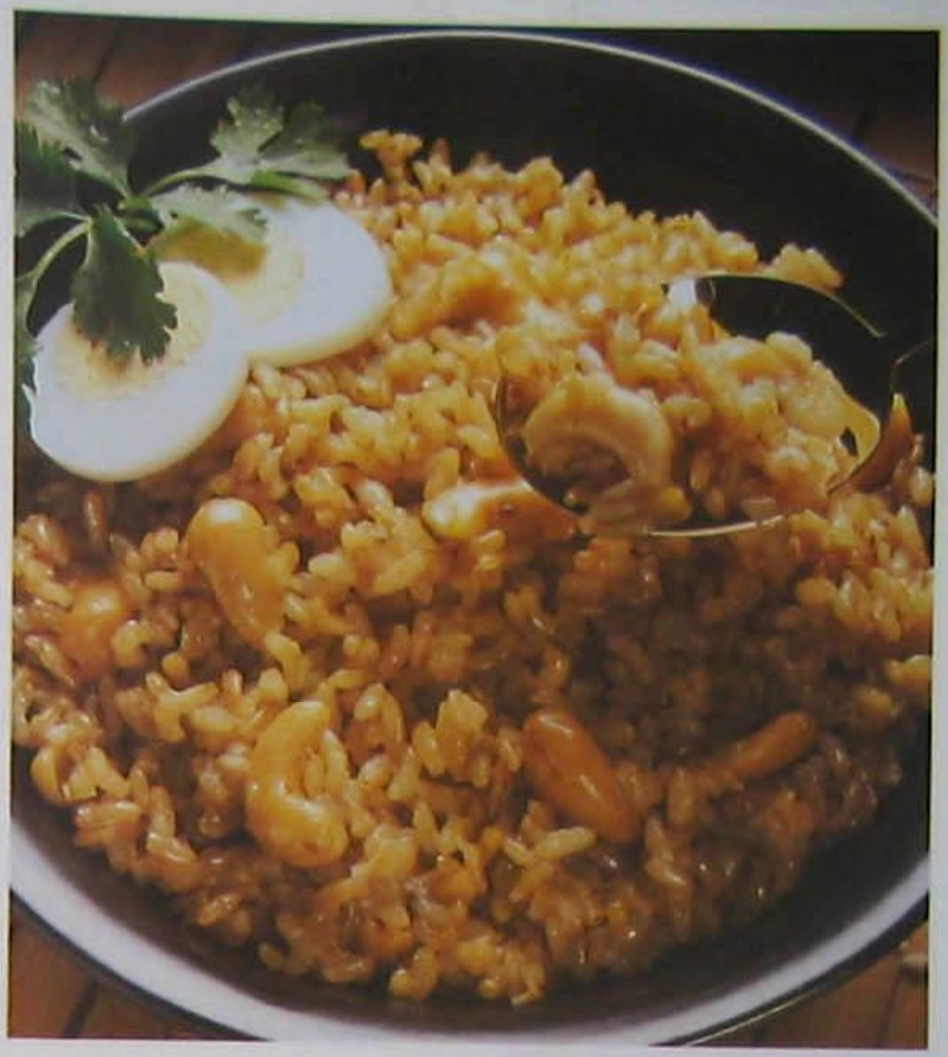
28 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz brown rice
30ml / 2tbls sesame or vegetable oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
2.5ml / ½tsp ground mace
5ml / 1tsp salt
50g / 2oz unsalted cashew nuts
500ml / 18fl oz boiling water
1 hard-boiled egg, sliced

SERVES 4

1 Place the rice, oil, onion and garlic in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir in the spices, salt and nuts.
2 Pour in the boiling water, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25 minutes, or until the rice is tender and the liquid absorbed, stirring twice. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
3 Fluff rice, garnish with egg and serve.



RAY DUNS

MENU

Parsley Pancakes
Herby pancakes with julienne vegetables

Party Beef Kebabs
Succulent cubes of steak with crisp salad

Spicy Brown rice
Tender grains with cumin, coriander and mace

Fruits with Apricot Sauce
Lightly cooked fruits with a tangy purée

SERVES 4

Countdown

The day before
Prepare the Parsley Pancakes, interleaving them with greaseproof paper. Wrap the pancake stack in vented stretch wrap and store in the refrigerator.

In the morning
Cut the vegetables for the Vegetable Medley into julienne strips. Place the peppers and the carrots and beans in separate polythene bags and refrigerate. Hard boil the eggs for the Spicy Brown Rice, but do not shell them. Microwave the apricot sauce and chill. Microwave fruits; allow to cool and then chill.

One hour before the meal
Marinate the beef for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the Spicy Brown Rice to the end of stage 2. Make up the kebabs, threading the skewers with beef and chestnuts.

Just before the first course
Microwave the Vegetable Medley. Then place the pancake stack on a plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 1¼-1¾ minutes. Assemble the pancakes with the filling and serve. Place the rice in the microwave and re-heat, covered, at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes.

During the first course
Microwave the kebabs, turning them halfway through. Meanwhile, garnish the rice with the sliced egg. Leave the kebabs to stand.

Just before the second course
Microwave the sauce and serve hot, with the rice, kebabs and a crisp green salad.

Parsley pancakes

6¼ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

100g / 4oz wholewheat flour
pinch of salt
1 egg, lightly beaten
275ml / ½pt skimmed milk
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
vegetable oil for cooking
Vegetable Medley (see recipe) to fill

MAKES 8

1 Sift the flour and salt into a bowl, adding any bran caught in the sieve. Stir in the egg and half the milk and beat with a wooden spoon until smooth. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Stir in enough of the remaining milk to give the batter the consistency of single cream. Mix in the parsley.
2 Grease the base of a 15cm / 6in crêpe or frying pan with a thin film of oil. Heat the pan on a conventional cooker. Add about 30ml / 2tbls batter and swirl around to evenly coat the base of the pan. Cook over a medium to high heat until underside of the pancake has set. Turn over and cook until the other side is golden.
3 Transfer to a plate or clean working surface to cool, and repeat the process until all the batter has been used. Then stack the cooked and cooled pancakes on top of each other, with a strip of greaseproof paper between each one. You should make 8 pancakes. Prepare the filling.
4 Cover the stack of pancakes with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Fold each in four to make a triangle, fill and serve at once.

Freezer notes

The batch of pancakes can be frozen and stored for up to three months. Prepare the pancakes, interleaving them with strips of greaseproof paper. Place the stack in a freezer bag and freeze. To thaw, microwave at 100% (High) for 1¼-1¾ minutes.

ANDREW WHEETLOCK

Vegetable medley

5½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

100g / 4oz carrots, cut into strips
100g / 4oz French beans, cut into 5cm / 2in lengths
30ml / 2tbls white wine vinegar
½ yellow pepper, seeded and cut into thin 5cm / 2in strips
½ red pepper, seeded and cut into thin 5cm / 2in strips
5cm / 2in piece cucumber, cut lengthways into thin 5cm / 2in strips
75ml / 5tbls natural yoghurt
5ml / 1tsp wholegrain mustard
pepper

MAKES 8 PANCAKES

1 To prepare the filling, place the carrots and beans in a bowl with the vinegar. Cover with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Add the yellow and red peppers, stir to mix, then microwave for a further 2½-3½ minutes or until the vegetables are just tender.
2 Add the cucumber, yoghurt, mustard and pepper, stir thoroughly and leave to stand, covered, for 3 minutes. Cover and leave to one side until needed.

Party beef kebabs

7 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

450g / 1lb sirloin steak, cut into 20 bite-sized cubes
4 × 25g / 1oz slices ham
225g / 8oz water chestnuts, drained
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste

MARINADE
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
60ml / 4tbls tomato juice
10ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed

few drops Tabasco sauce

SERVES 4

1 In a bowl, combine the lemon juice, tomato juice, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, garlic and Tabasco to make the marinade. Add the cubes of beef and marinate for at least 30 minutes.

2 Cut each ham slice into four strips and wrap each strip round a water chestnut. Thread five cubes of beef and four water chestnuts alternately on to each skewer.

3 Place the kebabs on a microwave roasting rack, cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, turning the kebabs after half the cooking time.

4 Wrap the kebabs in foil and stand for 3-4 minutes. Meanwhile, add the cooking juices to the marinade with the tomato purée. Part-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until boiled and slightly thickened. Serve hot with the kebabs.

Fruits with apricot sauce

12 mins

Standing time: none

2 pears, peeled, cored and quartered
2 peaches or nectarines, halved, stoned and sliced
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
2 kiwi fruits, peeled and sliced
2 oranges, peeled and thickly sliced, pips removed

SAUCE
100g / 4oz dried apricots
425ml / ¾pt unsweetened orange juice
15-30ml / 1-2tbls lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Place the apricots for the sauce in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl with half the orange juice. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes, stirring twice.

2 Cool, then purée in a food processor or blender until smooth. Stir in the remaining orange juice and add the lemon juice to taste. Pour into a serving jug or bowl, cover and chill until needed.

3 Sprinkle the pears and peaches or nectarines with the lemon juice to prevent them discolouring.

4 Arrange all the prepared fruit on a large shallow plate: place the kiwi fruit in the centre, with the orange slices, overlapping, around them. Drain the pears and peaches, reserving the lemon juice for later. Arrange them in a circle around the outside of the serving dish.

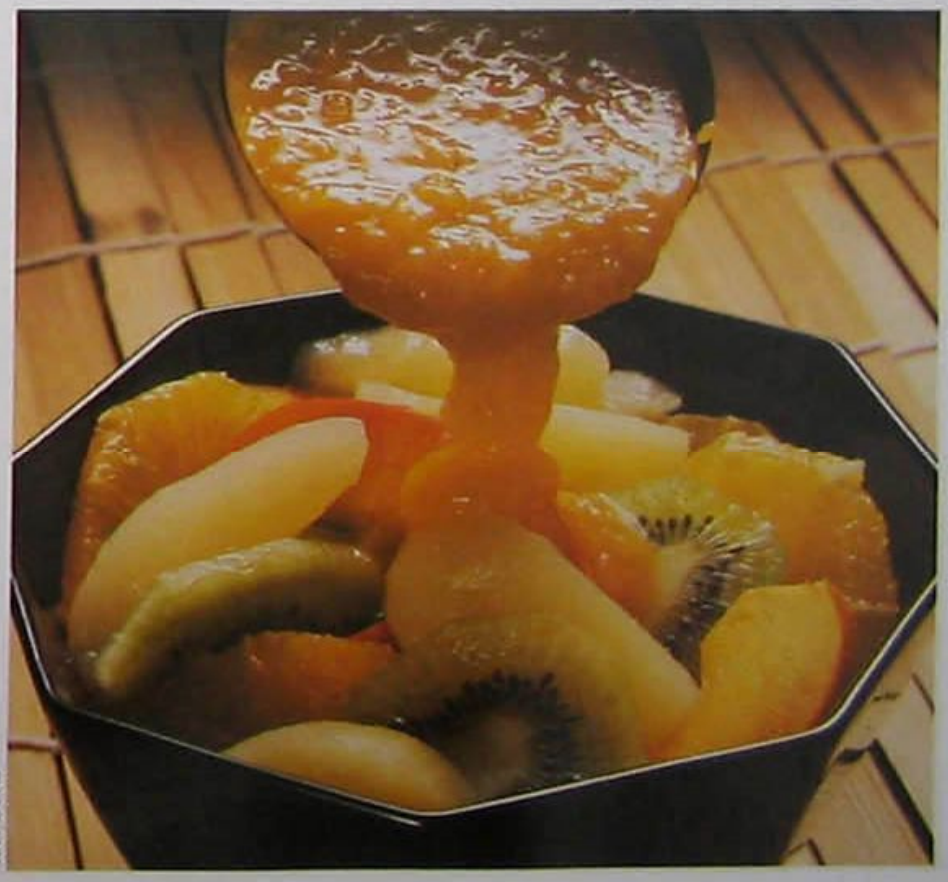
5 Cover the fruit with vented stretch wrap and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until just tender. Baste the pears and peaches with lemon juice and rotate the dish twice.

6 Leave to cool, then chill in the refrigerator. Serve with the apricot sauce.

Cook's notes

Use a serrated knife to peel the oranges, and cut them with a sawing movement; take care to remove the bitter white pith.

Left: *Parsley Pancakes*
Below: *Fruit with Apricot Sauce*



RAY DUNS

Speedy spuds

For speed and convenience, ready-prepared potatoes are hard to beat. Couple them with today's modern microwave cooking — and you have an instant success.

Potatoes are so popular, it's no wonder they come in so many convenient and handy-to-use forms. Frozen or packeted, they provide the basis for very quick accompaniments at mealtimes and they're easy to do in the microwave.

What could be handier than instant mash? Give it a new look by adding a few simple ingredients — cheese, chives, bacon or paprika — or be clever and try your own ideas to add flavour and colour. Make more of mashed potato by using it as a casing for a large 'pie' or for individual egg nests.

Frozen potatoes come in a variety of shapes and forms and many of these can be cooked successfully on a microwave browning griddle.

Clockwise from top: *Micro Mash with Cheese, Chives, Bacon, Paprika*

Micro mash

5 mins

Standing time: none

200ml / 7fl oz milk
200ml / 7fl oz water
75ml / 6tbls instant mashed potato powder

SERVES 4

VARIATIONS

Both Micro Mash and Creamed Potato can be varied in any of the following tasty ways.

Cheese: mix in 75g / 3oz grated Cheddar. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until cheese melts.

Chive: stir in 15ml / 1tbls snipped chives. Serve immediately.

Bacon: microwave 4 rashers of streaky bacon on a rack for 2-3 minutes at 100% (High). Drain on absorbent paper and stand for 2 minutes. Crumble or chop bacon, stir into potato and reheat at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.

Paprika: stir in 2.5ml / ½tsp paprika and serve.

Combine these variations or use different herbs and flavourings.

How to microwave Micro mash

Combine *milk and water in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes. Stir in potato.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes, or until all the liquid is absorbed. Stir well and serve.*

Potato nests

12 mins

Standing time: 1 min

Serve with a crisp mixed salad for a quick light lunch or supper.

1 quantity Creamed Potato (see recipe, below)
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
4 large eggs

SERVES 4

1 Mix parsley with potato. Spoon into four 150ml / ¼pt individual dishes, leaving a well in the centre of each. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until set.
2 Break an egg into each well. Prick the yolks with a cocktail stick. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5½-6½ minutes, or until the whites are nearly set.
3 Stand for 1 minute.

Creamed potato

4½ mins

Standing time: none

425ml / ¾pt milk
25g / 1oz butter
90ml / 6tbls instant mashed potato powder

SERVES 4

Easy cheesy pie

24½ mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity of Micro Mash
1 egg, beaten
25g / 1oz butter

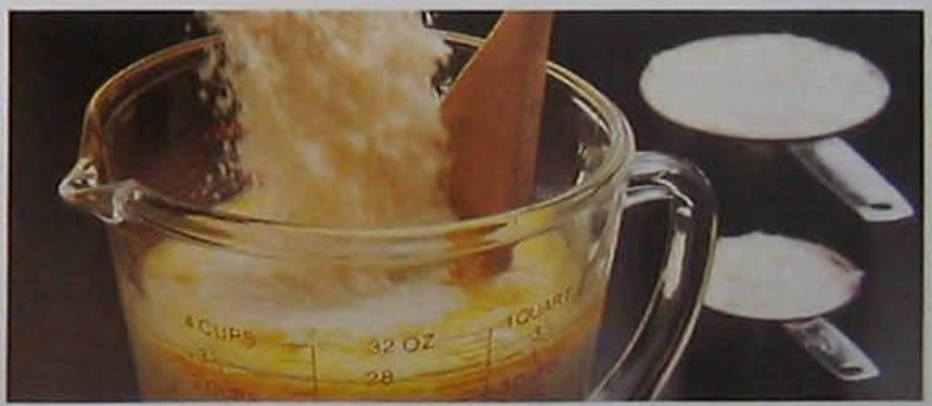
FILLING

3-4 leeks (450g / 1lb), sliced
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
paprika, to dust

SERVES 4

1 Make up mash as directed. Add egg and butter and mix in well.
2 Spread on a plate into a 20cm / 8in round, building up the sides. Microwave at 70% (Medium High) for 4-5 minutes, or until firm.
3 Place leeks and butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
4 Add flour; mix well. Gradually add milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes; stir once. Add parsley; season.
5 Stir cheese into leek mixture and pour into potato case. Microwave at 70% (Medium High) for 10-12 minutes. Sprinkle with paprika and serve.

How to microwave Creamed potato



Place *milk and butter in a large jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the butter is melted. Stir in the potato and mix well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until all the liquid is absorbed. Stir well. Serve immediately, or use in the recipes.*

Cheese 'n' potato bake

19 mins

Standing time: none

2 spring onions, chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
450g / 1lb fresh or frozen grated potatoes
290g / 10oz can cream of chicken soup
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz thin Cheddar cheese crackers, crushed

SERVES 4

1 Place the onions, butter and potatoes in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the potato is thawed and warm.
2 Stir in the soup, soured cream and seasoning. Pour into a 20cm / 8in round baking dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-12 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.
3 Sprinkle the cracker crumbs over the top and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until heated through.
4 Serve with chicken or chops and a mixed salad or green vegetable.

Left: *Grated Potatoes with Chives*
Below: *Cheese 'n' Potato Bake*

Grated potatoes with chives

6 mins

Standing time: none

175ml / ½pt milk
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives
400g / 14oz packet Swiss-style grated potatoes

SERVES 4

1 Place milk, butter and flour in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Whisk well to mix in flour. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking every minute.
2 Stir in chives and potatoes. Microwave, covered, for 3-3½ minutes, or until potatoes are heated through.

RAY DUNS

Spicy Potato Patties

Spicy potato patties

16½ mins

Standing time: none

These spicy potatoes, called Pakoras, are a popular Indian snack, and make a delicious tea-time savoury served with a salad.

50g / 2oz spinach leaves
2 × 400g / 14oz packets Swiss-style grated potatoes
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls chopped coriander
pinch of cayenne pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cumin
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
5ml / 1tsp turmeric
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
tomato ketchup or sauce, or mango chutney to serve

COATING
2 eggs, beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp turmeric
1.5ml / ¼tsp cayenne pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin

MAKES 6

1 Wash spinach and drain. Place in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until tender. Drain well and chop.
2 Place spinach, potatoes, egg, coriander leaves, cayenne, cumin, coriander and turmeric in a large bowl. Season and mix well.
3 With floured hands, shape into six 20mm / ¾in thick patties.
4 Make the coating: mix together the eggs and spices, season and stir well. Dip patties into beaten egg and coat evenly.
5 Pre-heat a browning griddle for 5 minutes at 100% (High), or according to manufacturer's instructions. Brush with half the oil.
6 Place three patties on the griddle. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until lightly browned on underside. Turn over and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2-3 minutes.
7 Reheat griddle at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Brush with the rest of the oil. Add remaining patties and microwave as before.
8 Serve with ketchup or chutney.

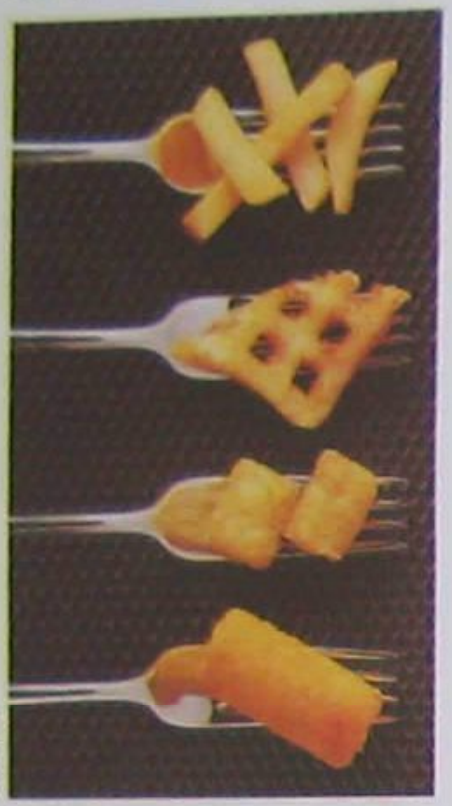
Microtips

For crisper results when microwaving frozen oven chips or other shapes (see chart, page 1766), microwave quantities over 350g / 12oz in two or three batches.

Cook's notes

If frozen grated potatoes or packets of grated potatoes are difficult to obtain, use fresh grated potatoes in the same quantities in Grated Potatoes with Chives and Cheese 'n' Potato Bake on page 1764 and in the Spicy Potato Patties, right.

How to microwave frozen potatoes on a browning griddle



TYPE	SERVES	AMOUNT	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
Oven chips	2	350g / 12oz	11-12 mins
	1	175g / 6oz	6-7 mins
Potato waffles	4	4 waffles	6-7 mins
	2	2 waffles	5-6 mins
	1	1 waffles	4-5 mins
Potato shapes	4	450g / 1lb	9-11 mins
	2	225g / 8oz	5-7 mins
	1	100g / 4oz	4-5 mins
Croquettes	4	16 croquettes	14-15 mins
	2	8 croquettes	7-8 mins
	1	4 croquettes	4-5 mins

Procedure: *Pre-heat browning griddle for 5 minutes at 100% (High), or according to manufacturer's instructions. Brush lightly with oil and add potatoes. Turn over and rearrange halfway through cooking time. Serve immediately.*

Potatoes and gravy

11 mins

Standing time: none

1 quantity Micro Mash or Creamed Potato (page 1763)

GRAVY

425ml / ¾pt water
1 beef stock cube
15g / ½oz butter
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
5ml / 1tsp tomato purée or paste
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 For the gravy, crumble stock cube into water in a 1.1L / 2pt jug. Add flour, mix well and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, whisking twice.
2 Add butter and whisk well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, then whisk in tomato purée, nutmeg and seasoning.
3 Microwave for 2-3 minutes, stir once. Set aside and keep warm.
4 Reheat potato, covered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes and serve.

Potatoes and Gravy

Turkey from frozen

Frozen whole turkey and turkey portions are thawed in record time in the microwave, ready for roasting or turning into exotic oriental dishes and succulent saucy recipes.

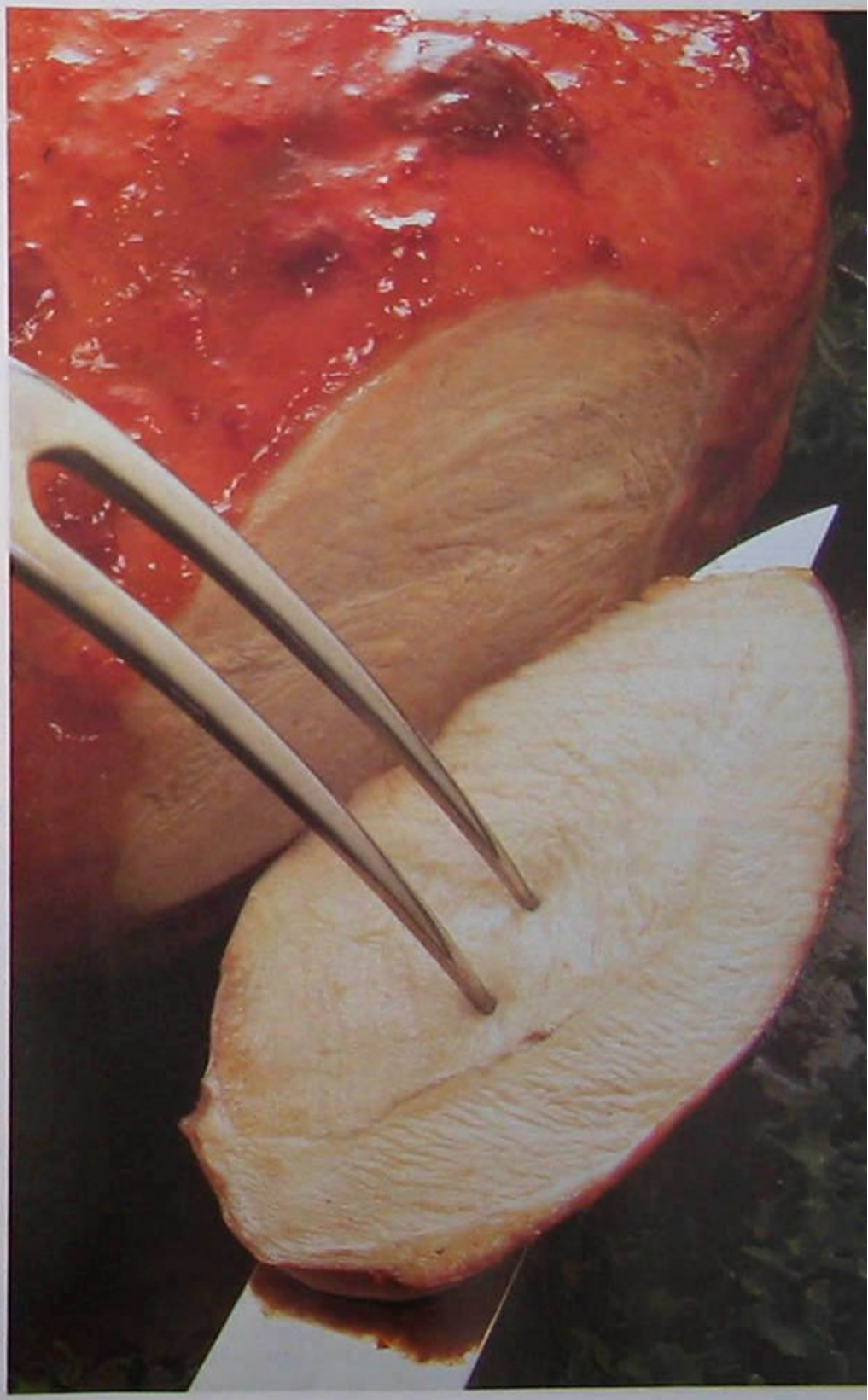
Although turkey may not be an everyday food, thawing turkey in the microwave is so convenient, you'll suddenly find it much more versatile. Readily available from supermarkets and freezer centres, turkey is frozen whole and in pieces. No longer do you have to take the turkey out of the freezer a day ahead as, with the microwave, a 2.3kg / 5lb bird can be ready for cooking in just one hour. Turkey pieces are even simpler to handle and really delicious in stews, sauces and glazes.

What to buy

A whole turkey is useful for entertaining and any leftovers can be chopped up with vegetables, rice or pasta for some tasty suppers. Turkey legs are generally quite large — one leg provides enough meat for two people. The breast or leg roasts are useful cuts as they consist entirely of meat, so there is no waste. Cubed turkey may be frozen in a solid block, or free-flowing for convenience.

Thawing turkey

Less flavour and fewer juices are lost when turkey is thawed just before using; start microwaving as soon as standing is completed. Before thawing whole turkey, check that it will fit easily into the cooker. There should be at least a 5cm / 2in gap between the turkey and cooker walls. Whole turkey and turkey pieces may be left in the original wrappings — if no metal is used — for the first half of thawing, but it is easier to detect over-thawed areas if the meat is unwrapped right from the start. It is important to discard the layer of fat from breast or leg roasts before thawing, otherwise this starts to cook immediately; do not replace for cooking, either.



Tangy Glazed Turkey

Turkey pieces and any protruding parts on a whole turkey — such as wing and leg tips or backbone — thaw quickly and should be watched closely. Shield these areas with small pieces of smooth foil. Remember the foil must be well secured to prevent it coming loose and falling against the sides of the cooker. Spread legs and wings away from the breast of a whole turkey, when possible, to help thaw the areas in between.

Standing time is essential to complete thawing. Standing a bird in cold water helps to bring it to the right temperature. When thawed, the cavity should be cold but not icy. Rinse it in cold water before use. Turkey pieces should feel softened and cold when thawed.

Cooking thawed turkey

Turkey must be completely thawed before it is cooked. Whole turkey needs turning several times during microwaving to ensure even cooking through to the centre; baste during cooking with any juices to keep the meat moist.

Place turkey pieces with the meatiest parts to the outside where they will receive most microwave energy. Cover with greaseproof paper to contain spitting. Large turkey pieces and a whole turkey need standing time to complete cooking and tenderizing.

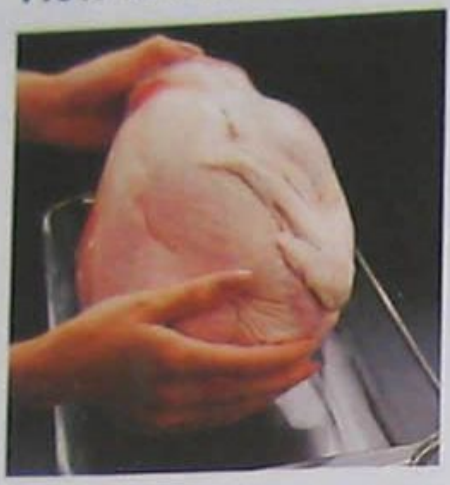
Cook's notes

The recipe time boxes include time for thawing the turkey meat. The standing times also include time for standing the turkey to complete thawing before cooking.

Microtips

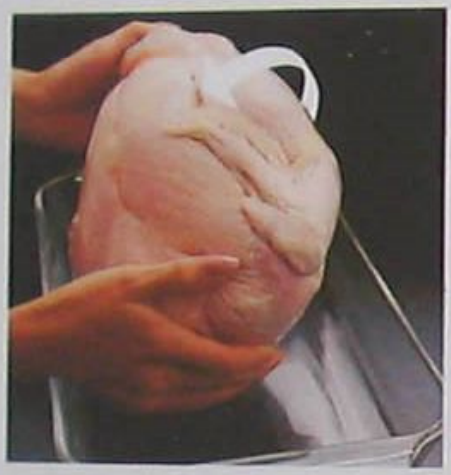
When thawing whole turkeys in the microwave, check the skin every 15 minutes. If it becomes hot, remove from the cooker, tent with foil and let stand for 15 minutes before continuing. Turkeys over 2.3kg / 5lb should stand at least three times during thawing.

How to thaw a whole turkey



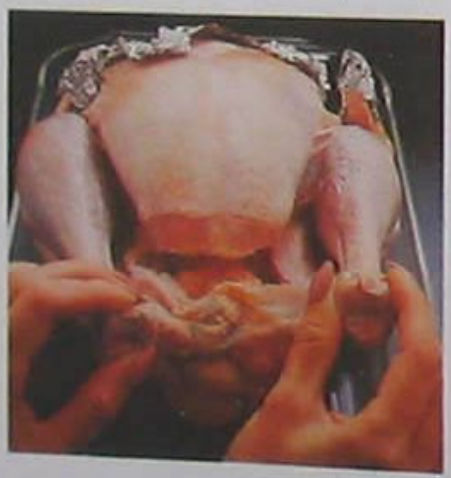
Weigh *the turkey and calculate thawing time (see chart, opposite). Place the unwrapped frozen turkey in a large dish, breast-side down.*

Microwave *at 20-30% (Defrost) for a quarter of the time. Shield warm spots with small pieces of smooth foil and turn the turkey breast-side up.*



Thaw *for another quarter of the time. Turn the turkey breast-side down, rearranging and smoothing the small pieces of foil to cover warm spots.*

Microwave *for another quarter of the time, loosening the leg joints and removing the giblets as soon as possible. Turn turkey breast-side up.*



Check *turkey for warm spots and shield these if necessary with fresh pieces of smooth foil. Rotate dish half a turn and microwave for remaining time, loosening leg and wing joints.*

Leave *the turkey to stand in cold water for 20-30 minutes, or until the cavity feels cold, but not icy. Rinse the bird in cold running water and pat dry before cooking.*

Tangy glazed turkey

76½ mins

Standing time: 35 mins

60ml / 4tbls pure fruit cherry preserve
½ × 177g / 6oz jar unsweetened apple sauce
salt and pepper
2.3kg / 5lb frozen whole turkey, thawed (see chart, below)

SERVES 6

1 Mix together the preserve, apple sauce and seasoning in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until melted, stirring once.
2 Brush a little glaze over the turkey and place, breast-side down, in a large dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
3 Place the turkey on its side and brush with glaze. Continue microwaving at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Turn the turkey on its other side and brush with glaze. Microwave for 10 minutes more.
4 Turn the turkey breast-side up and brush with the remaining glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-10 minutes, or until the juices run clear when pierced with a skewer. Cover with foil and leave to stand for 15 minutes before carving.

Turkey stew

21½ mins

Standing time: 8 mins

1 large onion, sliced
2 carrots, thinly sliced
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
450-550g / 1-1¼lb frozen cubed turkey, thawed, (see chart)
15ml / 1tbls cornflour
275ml / ½pt chicken stock
175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp dried sage
salt and pepper
175g / 6oz frozen cut green beans

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion and carrots in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole with the oil. Microwave at 100/% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until softened.
2 Stir in the turkey and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring twice.
3 Blend the cornflour with a little stock, then stir in remaining stock. Add to the casserole with mushrooms, soy sauce, sage and seasoning; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; stir once.
5 Stir in the beans and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

Turkey Stew

Microwave thawing times for turkey

TYPE	AMOUNT	MICROWAVE TIME AT 20-30% (DEFROST)	STANDING TIME	PROCEDURE
Whole turkey*	per 450g / 1lb	8-10 mins	20-30 mins	See steps, opposite.
Turkey legs (about 650g / 1¼lb each)	2 4	20-22 mins 35-40 mins	5 mins 5 mins	See steps, page 1770. See steps, page 1770.
Turkey breast fillets (about 100g / 4oz each)	2 4	4-5 mins 7-8 mins	3 mins 3 mins	Rearrange and turn once during thawing.
Turkey breast or leg roast	per 450g / 1lb	9-11 mins	5 mins	Remove the layer of fat before thawing. Turn once and shield warm areas.
Cubed turkey meat free-flowing	per 450g / 1lb	5-6 mins	3 mins	Arrange in single layer; stir once during thawing.
block	per 450g / 1lb	8-9 mins	3 mins	Break off thawed pieces.

*See Microtips, page 1768.

Tipsy turkey

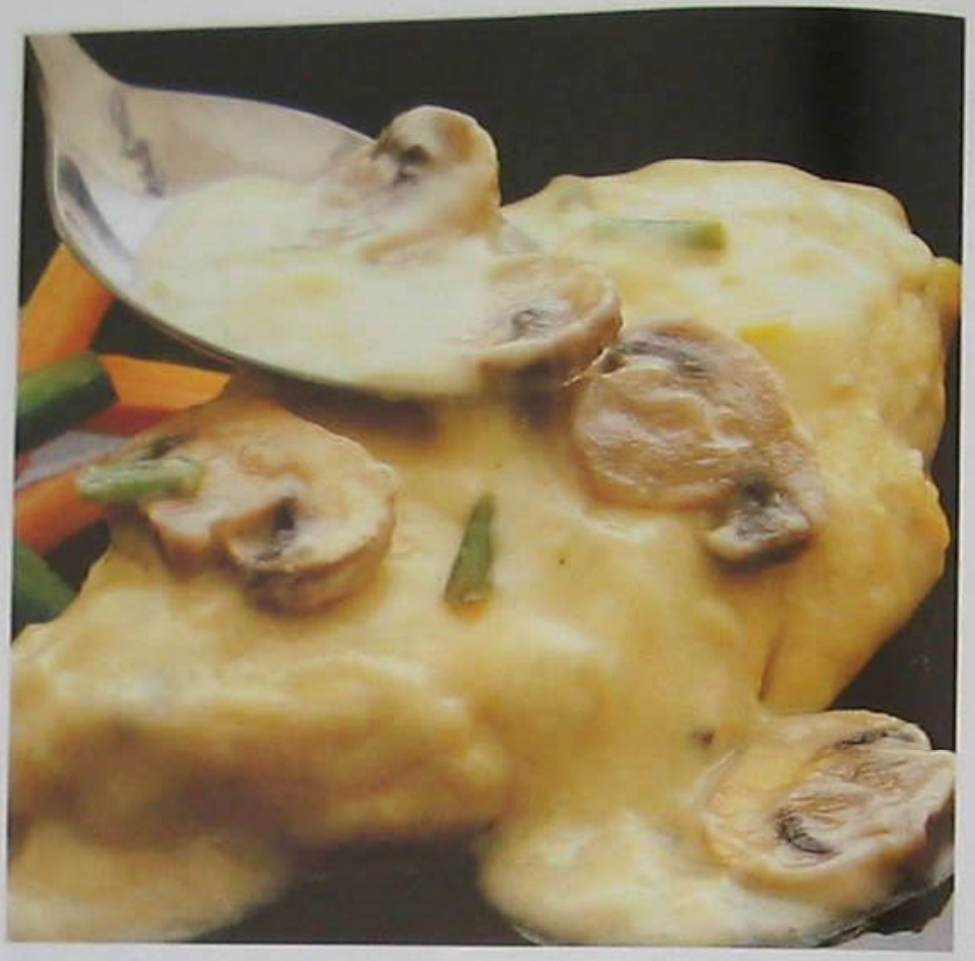
18¼ mins

Standing time: 6 mins

15g / ½oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 bunch of spring onions, sliced into 12mm / ½in lengths
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
45ml / 3tbls medium sherry
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper
4 frozen turkey breast fillets, thawed (see chart, page 1769)
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds to melt.
2 Add the mushrooms and spring onions and continue microwaving for 1 minute, stirring once. Stir in the flour, then gradually blend in the sherry, stock, mustard and seasoning until smooth.
3 Arrange the turkey fillets in a single layer in a large shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes.
4 Rearrange the fillets and spoon the sauce over them. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the turkey is cooked. Transfer the turkey to serving plates and let stand for 3 minutes.
5 Stir the yoghurt into the sauce in the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until thickened and heated. Spoon the sauce over the turkey and serve the dish immediately.

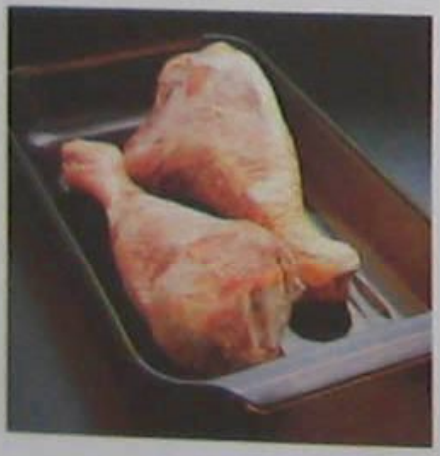


Tipsy Turkey

Cook's notes

Foil used for shielding must be smooth and well secured so it does not touch the cooker walls; take particular care when thawing a whole bird in a small cooker.

How to thaw turkey legs



Separate *the legs if possible and arrange in a shallow dish with the meatiest parts to the outside. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for half the time (see chart, page 1769).*

Shield *any warm areas of meat with small pieces of smooth foil, separating the legs if not already apart. Turn the legs over and thaw for the remaining time.*

Rinse *under cold running water, then leave to stand on a plate for 5 minutes, or until the meat can be pierced to the bone with a skewer. Pat dry and use as required.*

Lemony turkey breast roast

26½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

650g / 1¼lb frozen turkey breast roast, thawed (see chart, page 1769)
75ml / 3fl oz orange juice
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
large pinch of ground cloves
salt and pepper
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar
lemon slices, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place the turkey in a bowl.
2 Mix together the orange juice, lemon zest and juice, cloves and seasoning. Pour over the turkey and leave to marinate for 2-3 hours, turning the meat after 1 hour.
3 Drain the meat, reserving the liquid. Blend the cornflour with a little of the liquid, then add to the remaining liquid, together with the sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring once, until thickened and clear.
4 Brush a little marinade over the sides of the turkey roast to glaze it. Microwave at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes, or until golden, brushing frequently with the glaze. Stand 5 minutes. Garnish with lemon slices.

Lemony Turkey Breast Roast

Microtips

To make a sauce for the breast roast, blend the remaining glaze with any turkey juices and thin down with a little water or stock. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until heated; stir once.

Turkey oriental

31 mins

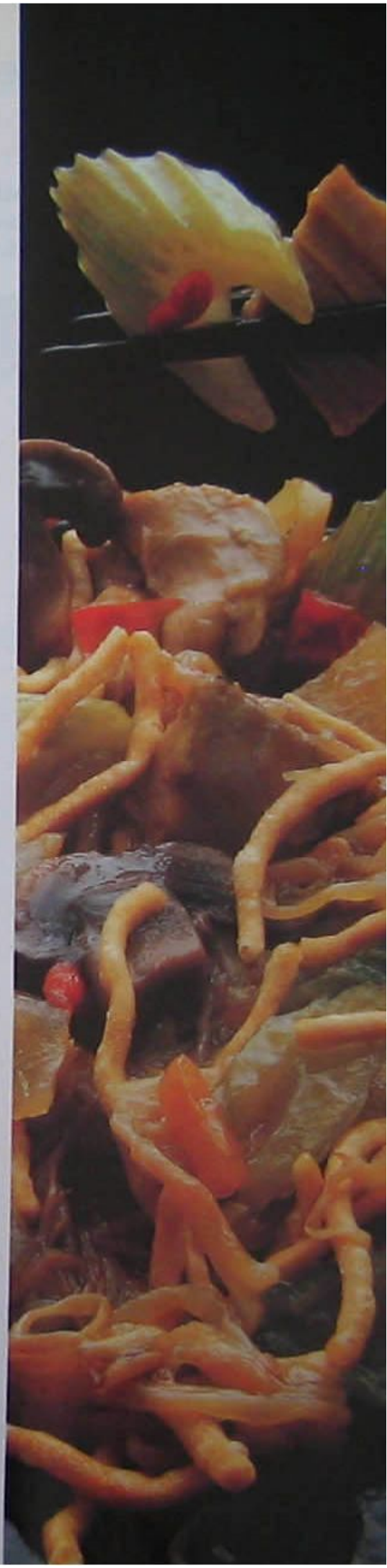
Standing time: 5 mins

2 frozen turkey legs, (about 550g / 1¼lb each), thawed (see chart, page 1769)
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, sliced
2 celery stalks, cut diagonally into 12mm / ½in slices
1 carrot, cut into 12mm / ½in strips
2 garlic cloves, crushed
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls medium sherry
15ml / 1tbls brown sugar
salt and pepper
175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
227g / 8oz can sliced bamboo shoots, drained
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
crispy noodles, to serve

SERVES 4

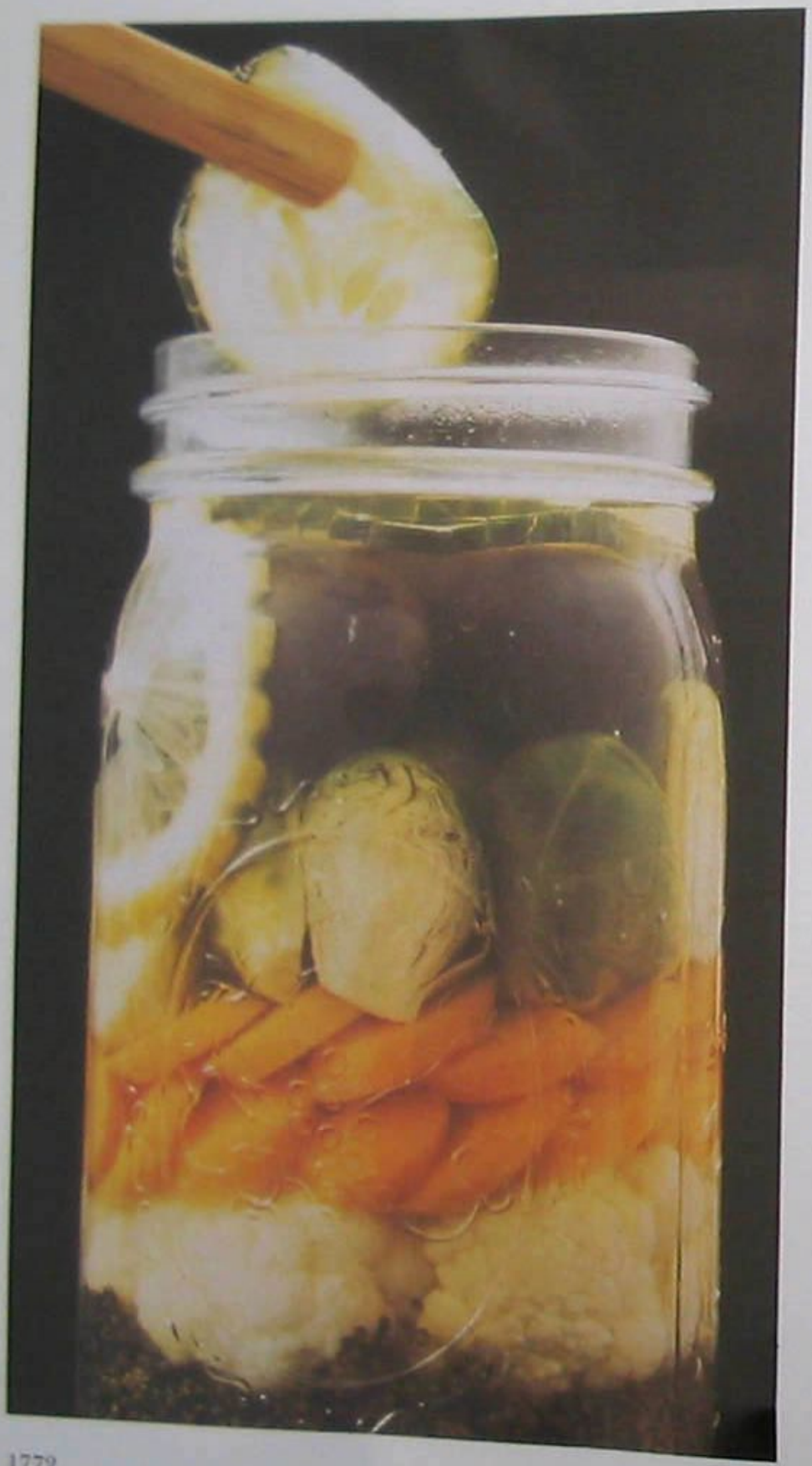
1 Remove the meat from the turkey legs and cut into cubes. Place in a 1.7L / 2pt dish with half the oil. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring twice. Drain, reserving the juices.
2 Place the vegetables, garlic and remaining oil in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; stir once.
3 Blend the cornflour with soy sauce, sherry, sugar, seasoning and 60ml / 4tbls of the reserved meat juices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes to thicken.
4 Add the sauce to the vegetables with the turkey, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and red pepper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until heated through. Sprinkle with crispy noodles.

Turkey Oriental



Pickles and relishes

If pickles and relishes have always seemed like time-consuming cooking, think again. The microwave makes light work of these delicious accompaniments.



Pickles and relishes are short term vegetable and fruit preserves, delicious with hot or cold meats, cheese dishes, curries or sandwiches. Making them is not difficult, but can be fiddly when cooked conventionally; with the microwave it is simple.

Pickling is a process of preserving vegetables by removing excess moisture, then storing them (uncooked or partially cooked) in a spiced vinegar. Moisture is removed using a brining (salting) process. The prepared vegetables are soaked in a strong mixture of salt and water, often overnight. Afterwards they are rinsed, drained and dried.

Fruit pickles undergo a slightly different process. They are not brined but rather cooked gently in a sugar and vinegar mixture and then bottled.

Relishes are less likely to be brined. Most are cooked with a spiced vinegar, which can be thickened and coloured to make a distinctive sauce, then bottled. The same vegetables are used for both pickles and relishes although softened sweetcorn and tomatoes make good relishes only.

Choosing vinegar

Vinegar is the crucial ingredient as its acidity preserves the vegetables and fruit. Choose a white vingear for vegetables which are light coloured: white wine vinegar has the most unobtrusive flavour. White malt vinegar could be used, however, and cider vinegar is especially good in recipes that contain apple. For dark pickles, such as red cabbage, use a red wine vinegar or dark malt vinegar.

Flavour the vinegar first with herbs and spices — the vegetables will absorb these flavours as they are stored. Fresh herbs are a must and whole spices are preferable as ground spices cloud the vinegar.

Microwaving pickles and relishes

The most time-consuming factor in the conventional pickling process is usually flavouring the vinegar — leaving the herbs and spices to infuse can take several days. The microwave, however, reduces this process to a few minutes. As microwaving intensifies flavours, heating the vinegar with herbs and spices briefly and then leaving to cool gives it a full flavour.

Furthermore, non-metallic containers are ideal for using acidic vinegars which can react with certain metals, giving the final pickle an unpleasant flavour. Jars should be sterilized conventionally, however. Fill with boiling water, then pour off the water and dry the jars in a conventional low oven.

Antipasto pickles

8 mins

Standing time: none

A wide-necked jar will make layering the vegetables easier. In addition to, or instead of the lemon slice you can add any of the following flavourings: 1 bay leaf, 1 garlic clove, 1 sprig of fresh dill, basil or oregano.

2-3 carrots, thinly sliced
100g / 4oz cauliflower florets
50g / 2oz broccoli florets
100g / 4oz small Brussels sprouts, halved lengthways or 2-3 courgettes, thinly sliced
275ml / ½pt water
50g / 2oz button mushrooms
14-18 black olives, stoned
8 cucumber slices
1 green peper, seeded and cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
1 lemon slice

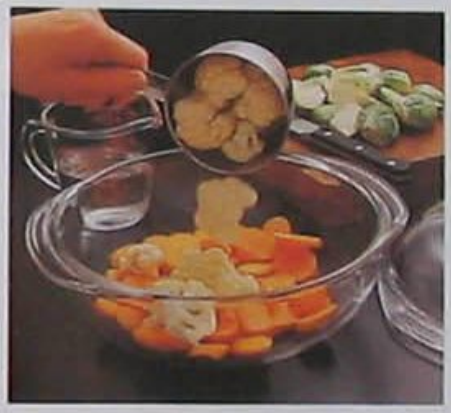
PICKLING LIQUID
275ml / ½pt water
150ml / ¼pt cider vinegar
15ml / 1tbls salt
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
SERVES 8

Cook's notes

Make sure that rinsed, brined vegetables are thoroughly dry before use. Excess liquid will dilute the vinegar and weaken its preserving qualities.

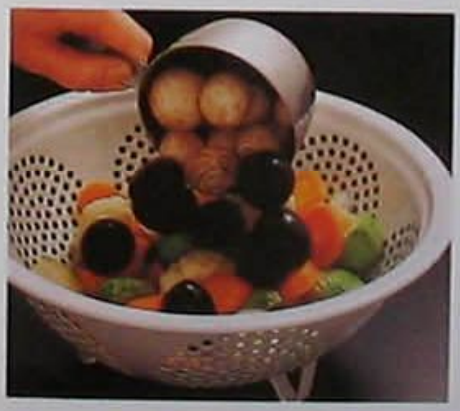
How to microwave Antipasto layers

Put *the pickling liquid ingredients into a measuring jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until boiling. Stir after 2 minutes.*



Put *the carrots, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts or courgettes in a large bowl. Add the water and cover the dish with a lid.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until the vegetables become brighter in colour. Stir the vegetables once, halfway through microwaving.*



Drain *the microwaved vegetables, then add the remaining vegetables. Rinse under cold running water then set aside to drain completely.*

Layer *the vegetables into a 1.1L / 2pt sterilized jar, adding any herbs or spices for flavouring as you work. Add the lemon slice.*

Pour *in the cool pickling liquid to cover the vegetables. Cover the jar, then refrigerate for 2-3 days before serving. Use within 1 month.*

Herby apple relish

20 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this relish hot or cold with pork, ham, sausages, beefburgers, turkey or chicken.

700g / 1½lb dessert apples, cored and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed (optional)
50g / 2oz sultanas
10ml / 2tsp dried mixed herbs
2.5ml / ½tsp dried sage
5ml / 1tsp salt
freshly ground black pepper
275ml / ½pt unsweetened apple juice
45ml / 3tbls cider vinegar
40g / 1½oz sugar

MAKES ABOUT 1kg / 2lb 3oz

1 Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl or casserole. Partly cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes, until the apples are soft and juicy. Stir two or three times.
2 Pour the hot relish into sterilized jars. Cover and store in the refrigerator. Use within 2 weeks.

Cranberry orange relish

8 mins

Standing time: none

A particularly tasty relish to serve with hot or cold pork or ham, or try it with roast turkey.

675g / 1½lb cranberries, fresh, canned, or frozen and thawed
juice and finely grated zest of 2 oranges
175g / 6oz sugar
50g / 2oz crystallized or glacé ginger, chopped

MAKES ABOUT 1kg / 2lb 3oz

1 Mix together the cranberries, orange juice and zest, sugar and ginger in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl.
2 Partly cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, or until the cranberries are just soft and juicy. Stir twice.
3 Pour the hot relish into sterilized jars. Cover and store in the refrigerator. Use within 2 weeks.

VARIATION
For a crunchy texture, add 50g / 2oz chopped pecan nuts to the relish after cooking.

Spicy relish

11 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

198g / 7oz can sweetcorn, drained
1 large garlic clove, crushed
½ red pepper, chopped
50g / 2oz small cauliflower florets
125ml / 4fl oz red wine vinegar
30ml / 2tbls light brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
10ml / 2tsp mustard powder
2.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
10ml / 2tsp water

MAKES ABOUT 450g / 1lb

1 Place all the ingredients except the cornflour and water into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes.
2 Blend cornflour and water and stir into relish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stand for 2-3 minutes; serve hot.

Pickled cucumber

3 mins

Standing time: none

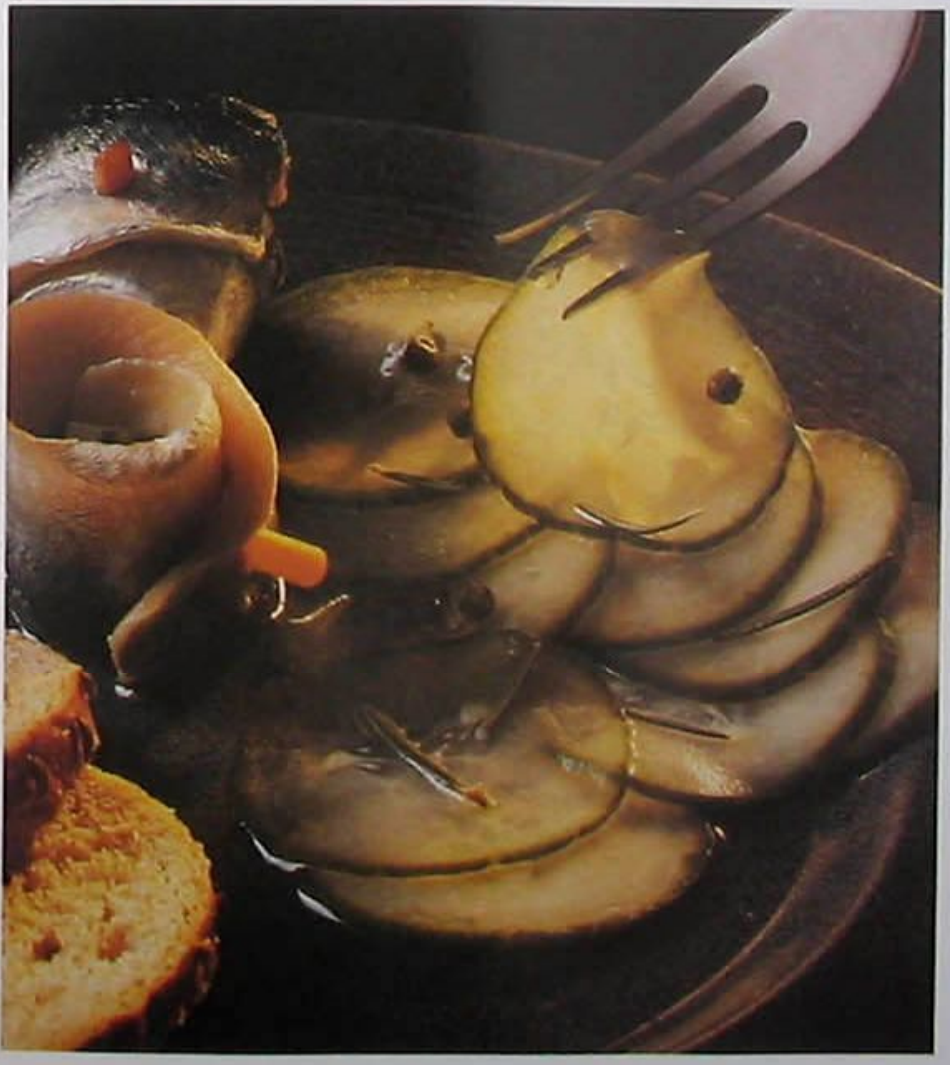
2 cucumbers, thinly sliced
575ml / 1pt cold water
25g / 1oz salt
sprig of rosemary or tarragon

SPICED VINEGAR
275ml / ½pt white wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls sugar
5ml / 1tsp dill seeds (optional)
8 green or white peppercorns

MAKES 900g / 2lb

1 Put the cucumber slices, water and salt into a large bowl. Cover and leave overnight. Drain the cucumber and rinse in cold water. Dry on absorbent paper.
2 Put all the ingredients for the spiced vinegar in a jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until just boiling. Cool.
3 Layer cucumber into two sterilized, 450g / 1lb jars. Strain vinegar over to cover. Add herb.
4 Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 week. Use within 1 month.

ANDREW WHITTUCK



CLINT BROWN

Piccalilli

13 mins

Standing time: none

Use any fresh vegetables up to a total of about 1kg / 2lb 3oz.

4 baby onions
100g / 4oz French beans, cut in 12mm / ½in slices
100g / 4oz small cauliflower florets
3 courgettes, sliced
175g / 6oz button mushrooms
½ cucumber, diced
1 small red pepper, seeded and diced

BRINE
575ml / 1pt cold water
25g / 1oz salt

SAUCE
575ml / 1pt white wine vinegar
45ml / 3tbls mustard powder or wholegrain mustard
10ml / 2tsp ground ginger
5ml / 1tsp turmeric
37.5ml / 7½tsp cornflour
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz sugar

MAKES ABOUT 1.2kg / 2½lb

1 Put the vegetables into a large bowl or casserole. Add the water for the brine and stir in the salt. Cover and leave overnight. Drain and dry on absorbent paper.

2 Put the vegetables into a large, clean bowl with 475ml / ¾pt of the vinegar. Partly cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, until the vegetables are tender crisp. Stir once.

3 Blend the remaining vinegar with the spices, cornflour and seasoning. Stir into the vegetables with the sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until thickened. Stir twice.

4 Pour the hot relish into sterilized jars, using a spoon handle to remove any air pockets. Cover and store in the refrigerator for at least 2 weeks before serving. Serve with salads and sandwiches, and use within 2 weeks.

Above: *Piccalilli*
Left: *Pickled Cucumber*

Watermelon pickle

11 mins

Standing time: none

1.8-2kg / 4-4½lb watermelon, cut into 2.5cm / 1in wedges
175g / 6oz sugar
6 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick
20g / ¾oz crystallized or glacé ginger, finely chopped
finely grated zest of ½ orange
200ml / 7fl oz cider vinegar

MAKES ABOUT 1kg / 2lb 3oz

1 Cut all the pink flesh from melon wedges and save for another use. Peel away the dark green skin, then cut the remaining light flesh into 2.5cm / 1in pieces.
2 Put this flesh into a large bowl and stir in the sugar. Cover and leave overnight.
3 Add the cloves, cinnamon stick, chopped ginger, orange zest and vinegar to the melon. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 11-13 minutes, until the pieces are transparent, stirring twice.
4 Pour the pickle into sterilized jars. Cover and refrigerate for 1 week before serving. Store in the refrigerator and use within 1 month. Serve with hot or cold ham, pork or chicken. Or use for an unusual Ploughmans lunch.

Cabbage relish

4½ mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb green, white or red cabbage, core removed, finely shredded
1 large onion, finely chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
100g / 4oz sugar
425ml / 15fl oz white wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp salt
2.5ml / ½tsp celery seed
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard seed
1.2ml / ¼tsp turmeric

MAKES ABOUT 2kg / 4lb

1 Mix together the cabbage, onion and green pepper in a bowl. Spoon the mixture into sterilized jars. Set aside.
2 Put the sugar, vinegar, salt, celery seed, mustard seed and turmeric into a measuring jug.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes until boiling, stirring after 2 minutes to dissolve the sugar and salt. Cool slightly then pour the warm liquid over the vegetables to cover.
4 Cover and refrigerate for 1 week before serving. Store in the refrigerator and use within 1 month. Serve with cold meat.

Corn relish

5½ mins

Standing time: none

600g / 1¼lb frozen sweetcorn kernels
½ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
¼ red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
100g / 4oz sugar
275ml / ½pt white wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp salt
5ml / 1tsp celery seed
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard seeds
5ml / 1tsp hot red pepper sauce

MAKES ABOUT 1.5kg / 3lb

1 Combine the corn kernels, green and red peppers and onion in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, until the corn is no longer icy, but still cool to the touch. Stir once. Pour into sterilized jars.
3 Put the remaining ingredients into a measuring jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, until boiling. Stir after 2 minutes.
4 Pour enough liquid into each jar to cover the corn. Cover and refrigerate for 1 week before serving. Use within 1 month. Serve with hamburgers or hot dogs.

Appetizers with appeal

Kick off the meal with a stunning starter, which is as good for you as it tastes and looks. Plenty of fresh ingredients — and microwave cooking — make for impressive dinner party pieces.

Fresh-tasting appetizers make the perfect opener to a meal. Light on calories, yet with plenty of colour and flavour, they make healthy starters everyone enjoys. Try dips and sauces using fresh vegetable purées and vegetable dunks. Or, just lightly microwave vegetables and serve with a vinaigrette or as kebabs. Whether you need an impressive dinner party mould or speedy suppertime snack, each recipe can be made light, healthy and delicious with the microwave.

What to use

Mix and match any flavours and textures, but always select the freshest ingredients possible. Fresh vegetables and fruit can be chopped and combined in dressings or marinades. Scrub rather than peel where possible, as the skins contain many vitamins and minerals. Use fresh vegetable and fruit juices to flavour sauces, too. Pure vegetable oils, such as olive or

Tomato Cucumber Mould

sunflower, are a good choice for salad dressings as they are rich in unsaturated fats. Fresh lemon juice can make a tangy alternative to vinegars. Use plenty of fresh herbs if available, otherwise flavour with the dried variety. Add as little salt as possible and only sprinkle on lightly after cooking or serve separately at the table.

Nuts and seeds are useful toppings for appetizers — they not only provide an attractive garnish, but are also rich in proteins and unsaturated fats.

Serve dips with wholewheat crackers or corn chips, and other starters with wholewheat bread, thinly sliced and toasted, if liked, to provide plenty of fibre. Avoid white bread and potato chips for dunking, if possible.

How to microwave Tomato cucumber mould

Place *the water in a small bowl and sprinkle over the gelatine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until just hot; stir to dissolve. Pour half the tomato juice into a large jug.*

Add *the apple juice, gravy granules, pepper and bay leaf to the jug, stirring well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until boiling; stir once. Remove bay leaf.*

Pour *the dissolved gelatine and remaining tomato juice into the tomato mixture, stirring well. Chill in the refrigerator for about 2 hours, or until thickened and beginning to set.*

Fold *in the chopped cucumber and spring onions and blend well with a wooden spoon. Lightly oil the base and sides of a 700ml / 1¼pt glass jelly mould.*

Pour *the tomato mixture into the mould. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours to set.*

To serve: *loosen the edges with a knife and turn out on to a plate. Garnish with lettuce leaves and cucumber slices.*

How the microwave helps

The microwave is a great asset when trying to produce good, wholesome starters. Just microwave vegetables in a little water and cook for the minimum time, so they remain tender-crisp. Short cooking times and little liquid mean the food stays as near its natural state as possible, and so retains maximum goodness.

Tomato cucumber mould

2¾ mins

Standing time: none

90ml / 6tbls cold water
17.5ml / 3½tsp (1 sachet) powdered gelatine
350ml / 12fl oz tomato juice
15ml / 1tbls apple juice
2.5ml / ½tsp rich beef gravy granules
pepper, to taste
1 bay leaf
6.5cm / 2½in (100g / 4oz) piece cucumber, peeled, seeded, chopped
30ml / 2tbls sliced spring onions

SERVES 4

Herbed mushrooms

6½ mins

Standing time: 3-5 mins

90ml / 6tbls water
30ml / 2tbls bulgar or cracked wheat
12 large mushrooms
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls finely chopped onion
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
pinch of fennel seeds
pinch of dried sage
pepper
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 6

1 Place the water in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until boiling. Add the wheat and stir well. Cover and leave to soak for 1 hour.

2 Remove the stems from the mushroom caps and chop enough to make 30ml / 2tbls. Place the

chopped stems, parsley, onion, lemon juice, fennel seeds, sage and pepper in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until tender.

3 Drain the wheat and squeeze out any excess water. Stir into the mushroom mixture together with the Parmesan cheese.

4 Stuff the mushroom caps with the mixture and arrange, stuffed-sides up, on a plate in a ring. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until tender. Stand for 3-5 minutes before serving.

Tangy kebabs

7¾ mins

Standing time: 8-9 mins

8 frozen Brussels sprouts
8 frozen whole baby carrots
1 small green pepper, seeded and cut into 16 pieces
8 fresh cauliflower florets
30ml / 2tbls water

LEMON DRESSING
40g / 1½oz polyunsaturated margarine
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
1.5ml / ¼tsp onion powder
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried marjoram
pepper

SERVES 8

1 Place the dressing ingredients in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, or until the margarine is melted, stirring once.

2 Place sprouts and carrots in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes to thaw. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

3 To assemble the kebabs, thread one Brussels sprout, a carrot, piece of green pepper, cauliflower floret and another piece of green pepper on to each of eight wooden skewers. Arrange in a circle on a plate so the sprouts are to the centre of the dish.

4 Sprinkle with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until tender-crisp, rotating dish half a turn once. Stand, covered, for 3-4 minutes before serving with the warmed dressing poured over.

Tangy Kebabs

Tangy kebabs for four: halve all the vegetable ingredients. Microwave the Brussels sprouts and carrots at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Microwave the assembled kebabs for 2-3 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender-crisp. Serve with the dressing.

Slimmer's notes

If you want to start your meal in slimline fashion, choose the Tomato Cucumber Mould at a mere 25Cal / 106kJ per portion, or try the Tangy Kebabs with just 50Cal / 210kJ per serving.

Tex-mex dip

5 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this dip with corn chips, wholewheat crackers or vegetable crudités. Any leftover dip will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

1 small onion, chopped
½ small green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin
pepper, to taste
400g / 14oz can chick peas, rinsed and drained
30ml / 2tbls water
2 small tomatoes, seeded and chopped

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the onion, green pepper, garlic, cumin and pepper in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until tender, stirring once. Purée in a blender or food processor together with the drained chick peas and water.
2 Return the puréed mixture to the bowl and add the tomatoes, blending well. Cover and microwave for 2-3 minutes, or until hot, stirring once. Serve immediately.

Microtips

To reheat half the quantity of Tex-mex Dip: place in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until hot, stirring once.

Chunky tomato dip

12 mins

Standing time: none

Choose a colourful mixture of fresh vegetables to serve with this dip, including sticks of cucumber, carrot and sweet pepper. It makes a good pancake filling or sauce for home-made burgers, too.

1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed

Tex-mex Dip

396g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
227g / 8oz can Neapolitan or Italian-style tomato sauce
175g / 6oz frozen sweetcorn
1 celery stalk, chopped finely
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp cayenne pepper
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin

TO SERVE
corn chips or assorted vegetable crudités

SERVES 8-10

1 Place the onion and garlic in a 800ml / 1½pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until the onion is tender-crisp and flavours are blended.
2 Stir in all the remaining dip ingredients, mixing well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until hot and the flavours have blended and the mixture thickened, stirring twice.
3 Allow to cool, then chill for at least 4 hours. Serve with the corn chips or chopped vegetables.

Healthy hints for appetizers

- Use fresh, unprocessed ingredients
- Microwave vegetables in water, not fat
- Microwave for the minimum cooking time, so vegetables remain tender-crisp
- Use pure vegetable oils or low-fat yoghurt to make dressings
- Add little or no salt — flavour with fresh or dried herbs instead
- Serve with wholewheat bread, rolls, crackers or pitta bread for extra fibre.

Cook's notes

If you have any left-over Chunky Tomato Dip, store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Serve chilled or reheat and serve hot. To reheat enough for four, place 150ml / ¼pt in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring once.

Mini pizzas

1½ mins

Standing time: none

2 × 14cm / 5½in wholewheat pitta breads
60ml / 4tbls Quick Tomato Sauce (see Part 51, page 1398)
50g / 2oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls chopped green pepper
2 medium mushrooms, sliced

SERVES 4

1 Split the pitta breads in half and toast conventionally until golden crisp.
2 Top the cut edge of each pitta slice with 15ml / 1tbls of the tomato sauce and spread to the edge. Sprinkle with equal quantities of cheese, pepper and mushrooms.
3 Place the pizzas on a plate lined with a double thickness of absorbent paper and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the cheese has melted, rotating the dish once. Serve while still hot.

Rollmops with gooseberries

8 mins

Standing time: none

This makes a really special starter, full of goodness.

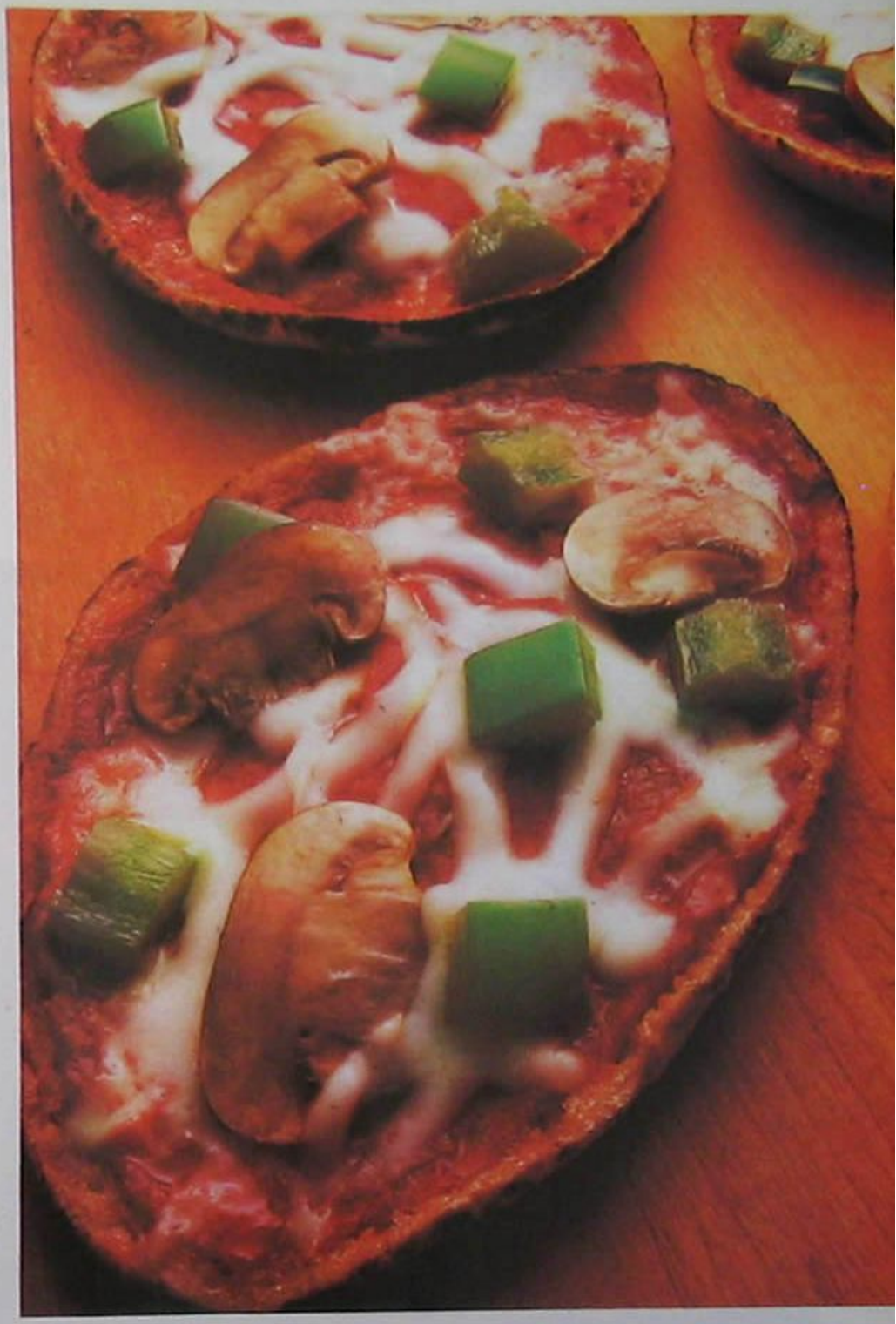
6 large or 12 small rollmops, drained, if necessary

SAUCE
700g / 1½lb gooseberries, hulled
45ml / 3tbls water
15ml / 1tbls caster sugar

FILLING
½ large cucumber, coarsely grated and well drained
½ large head of Chinese leaves, or bok choy, finely chopped
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 For the sauce: place the gooseberries and water in a 1.7L / 3pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, or until soft, stirring once. Drain and discard the liquid. Sieve the gooseberries, then stir in the sugar.
2 For the filling: combine the cucumber, Chinese leaves and salt and pepper. Add 15ml / 1tbls of the gooseberry purée, mixing together well.
3 Open out the rollmops and place on a board. Reserve 30ml / 2tbls of the filling for the garnish and spread the remainder evenly along the rollmops. Roll them up from the head end and arrange on six serving plates.
4 Spoon the gooseberry sauce over the rollmops and sprinkle with the reserved cucumber and Chinese leaf mixture. Serve the garnished rollmops cold, with wholewheat crackers, if liked.



Mini Pizzas

Microwaving rabbit

Rabbit is a versatile meat that deserves to be included among your favourite recipes. Its delicious flavour and texture make it ideal for the microwave which keeps it tender and succulent.

Rabbit is particularly suitable for microwave cooking because, like chicken and turkey, the meat is fine grained with little fat, gristle and connective tissue, so it cooks quickly and evenly to give tender results. High quality rabbit, jointed into neat and appetizing portions, some boneless, or cut into cubes, is available both fresh and frozen. Portions or cubes can be cooked in a moist stew or coated with a light sauce; mustard and herbs, orange or lemon can all be added along with vegetables and bacon.

Microwaving rabbit

When cooking rabbit in the microwave, arrange pieces in a single layer and turn them over and rearrange them at least once during microwaving to ensure that they cook evenly. If cooking cubes of meat, then move those from the edge of the dish towards the middle and test for doneness by cutting or one or two cubes in half.

When cooked, rabbit resembles chicken: pierce a rabbit portion at the thickest part with the point of a

Rabbit Casserole

DAVE KING

knife to test for doneness. The cooked meat should be firm and white all the way through. Like other microwaved meats, any tiny area of pink, soft meat will continue to cook during standing time

Ways with rabbit

To give you some idea of just how versatile rabbit meat is, you will find a traditional stew along side an interesting orange-flavoured casserole and a creamy dish of rabbit cooked in vermouth. There is also a quick and easy recipe for a layered terrine, with pistachio nuts and herbs — a selection of dishes which are all perfect for microwave cooking and ideal for dinner parties as well as family meals.

Once you have mastered the basic cooking techniques ou can vary the recipes to suit.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use fresh whole rabbit and portions for the recipes; rabbit is not available frozen or cubed.

Cook's notes

When preparing a rabbit stew or casserole, a gratin dish, or similar large, shallow casserole dish is the most convenient to use because it allows you to arrange the portions in a single layer, which helps to ensure even cooking.

Rabbit casserole

29 mins

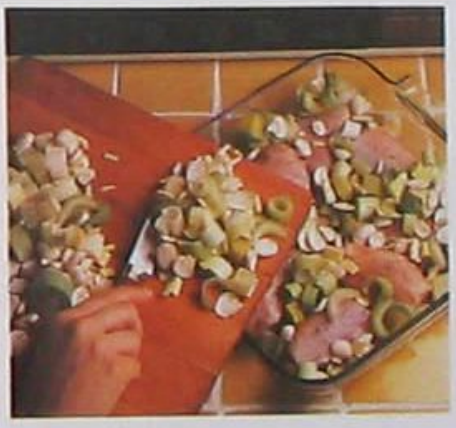
Standing time: 5 mins

900g / 2lb rabbit portions
salt and pepper
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp dried rosemary
225g / 8oz leeks, split lengthways and thickly sliced
2 celery stalks, sliced
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 chicken stock cube
150ml / ¼pt boiling water
15ml / 1tbls wholegrain mustard
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes

SERVES 4

How to microwave Rabbit casserole

Trim *fat from rabbit portions and fold any thin flaps of meat underneath to give a neat shape. Arrange the rabbit in a large casserole so that meaty parts are towards the outside.*



Sprinkle *seasoning, garlic and rosemary over rabbit joints. Add the leeks, celery and mushrooms, arranging the vegetables over and between the rabbit portions.*

Dissolve *stock cube in water and stir in mustard. Pour tomatoes over rabbit, then add stock. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes. Turn rabbit portions over and rearrange.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 10 minutes. Check that rabbit is cooking evenly and turn over if necessary. Baste with cooking juice and re-cover.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the meat is firm and white. Any small pink areas will cook during standing. Stand for 5 minutes, then serve with rice or noodles.*

Freezer notes

To thaw 900g / 2lb rabbit portions or pieces: place on two sheets of absorbent paper on a large plate or shallow dish. Arrange joints around the edge of the dish with thicker parts to the outside. Cover loosely with absorbent paper and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 10 minutes. Turn joints over and re-cover. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for a further 15-17 minutes, or until the rabbit is just slightly icy. Stand for 5-10 minutes.

For 450g / 1lb, allow 12-15 minutes total thawing time.

Rabbit in vermouth

24 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

900g / 2lb rabbit portions
salt and pepper
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz streaky bacon, chopped
15ml / 1tbls capers
150ml / 5fl oz dry white vermouth
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
50g / 2oz butter, softened
150ml / ¼pt soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Trim fat from rabbit. Fold any flaps of meat underneath to make neat portions. Arrange them in a large casserole. Place the meatiest parts to the outside.
2 Season the rabbit. Sprinkle with onion, pepper, bacon and capers. Add vermouth.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Turn rabbit over, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 10-12 minutes. The rabbit should be white and firm. (Any small areas of slightly pink flesh will cook as the rabbit stands.) Stand 5 minutes.
4 Meanwhile, beat the flour into the butter to make a smooth paste. Remove the rabbit from the casserole and arrange on a heated serving dish or individual plates. Add the flour and butter paste, in pieces, to the sauce, stirring all the time until it melts.
5 Microwave the sauce, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir well. Blend in the cream and microwave for a further 1-2 minutes at 100% (High) without allowing the sauce to boil. Pour sauce over rabbit and serve with pasta shells.

Right: *Rabbit in Vermouth*
Below: *Rabbit Terrine*

DAVE KING

Rabbit terrine

29 mins

Standing time: none

This delicious and economical terrine makes an ideal lunch when served with warm, crusty bread and salad.

2 onions, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
50g / 2oz shelled, unsalted pistachio nuts, chopped
5ml / 1tsp chopped tarragon
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
100g / 4oz fresh breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
200ml / 7fl oz dry white wine
450g / 1lb rabbit, minced
450g / 1lb streaky bacon, minced
2 large garlic cloves, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
freshly grated nutmeg
45ml / 3tbls brandy
2 bay leaves
4 juniper berries

SERVES 6

1 Put the onions and butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until soft.
2 Mix a third of the onion with

Rabbit stew with orange

30 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

The slight tang of orange complements rabbit very well in this moist and colourful stew. Cubed boneless rabbit is available from some supermarkets. Alternatively, cut boned portions into cubes.

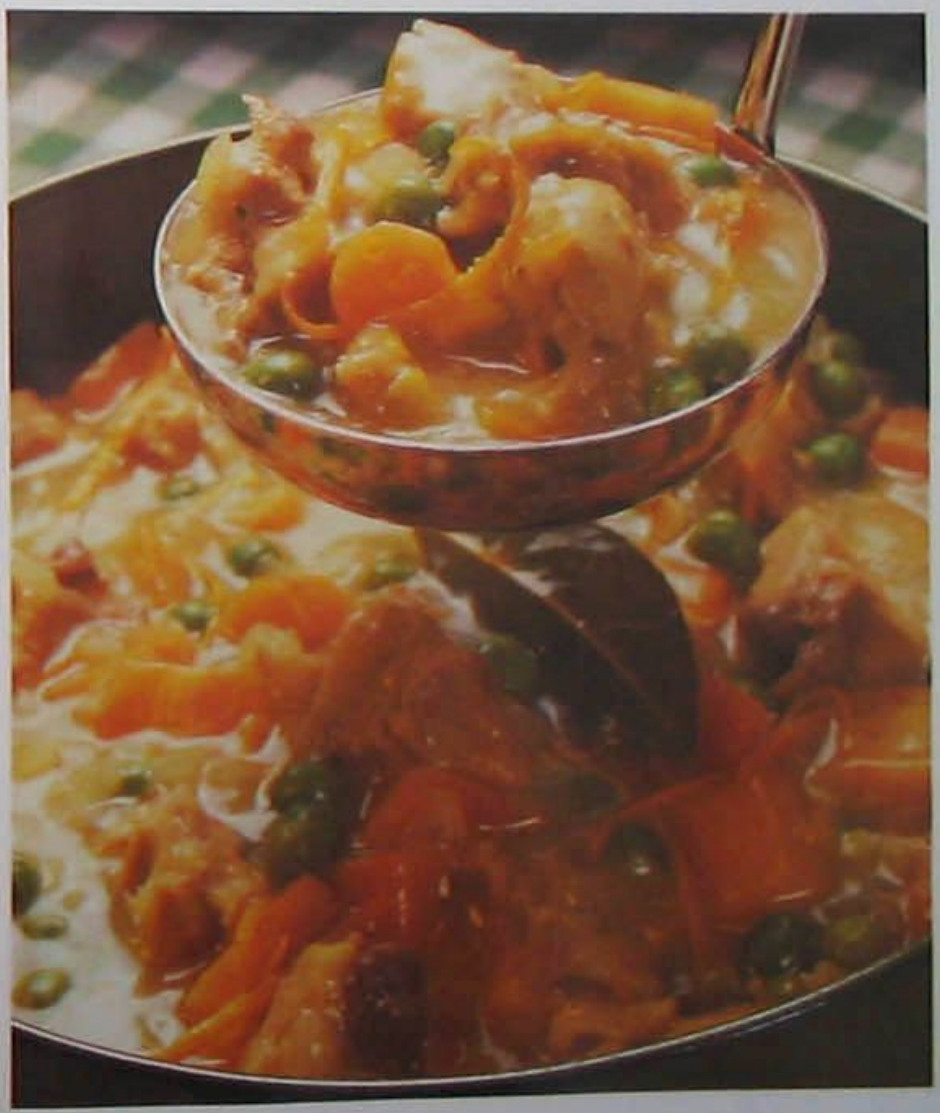
1 large onion, chopped
4 carrots (about 225g / 8oz) halved lengthways and cut into chunks
1 bay leaf
pared rind of ½ orange, cut into fine strips
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
juice of 1 orange
1 chicken stock cube
275ml / ½pt boiling water
450g / 1lb boneless rabbit, cubed
225g / 8oz frozen peas

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion, carrots and bay leaf into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Add the orange rind and oil and stir well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in the flour and seasoning. Pour in the orange juice and stir thoroughly. Dissolve the stock cube in the water and add to the casserole.
4 Stir in the rabbit cubes. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-17 minutes. Add the peas and stir well; rearrange the cubes of rabbit, lifting those at the outside of the dish towards the middle to ensure even cooking.
5 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, stir well and serve with a rice pilaf.

Rabbit Stew with Orange

the pistachio nuts, tarragon, parsley, half the breadcrumbs and seasoning. Moisten with 50ml / 2fl oz wine and mix well. Set aside.
3 Mix the rabbit and the bacon into the remaining onion. Add the rest of the breadcrumbs, the garlic, cinnamon and nutmeg. Pour in the remaining wine and mix well. Stir in the brandy.
4 Lay the bay leaves and juniper berries in the base of a 1.4L / 2½pt loaf dish. Carefully place a little of the rabbit mixture on top to keep them in place.
5 Spoon half the rabbit mixture in to the dish and smooth the surface. Cover with the pistachio nut mixture and spread them in a smooth, even layer. Top with remaining rabbit mixture. Cover.
6 Stand the terrine on a plate to catch any spills. Microwave at 100% (High) for 24-26 minutes, turning twice during cooking.
7 Test for doneness by inserting the point of a knife into the middle of the terrine and lifting some of the rabbit mixture from the centre. The meat should be white and firm. Smooth the top over again.
8 Leave to cool uncovered. When cold, place a double layer of greaseproof paper on top and weigh down. Chill several hours.



Fill a flan

For a fast and fabulous dessert, combine the convenience of a prepared flan case with a luscious filling made in minutes in the microwave.

Ready-made, pre-packed flan cases are available in many different shapes, sizes and textures. From large sponges to small, individual pastry cases, they can all be filled with a variety of quickly microwaved custard or fruit fillings to make 'instant' desserts that are sure to please.

Most of the recipes here are for fillings made in the microwave which are then poured or spread in the ready-made cases. You can, of course, make your own pastry case or sponge flan, either conventionally or in the microwave. (For a microwaved pastry case see Issue 14, page 370.) The flan case here is a chocolate sponge which is easy to prepare and very quick to cook in the microwave. If you do use pre-packed pastry cases or flans, remember never to put foil containers in the microwave. When buying them, note the sell-by dates on the packets as baked goods have a limited shelf life.

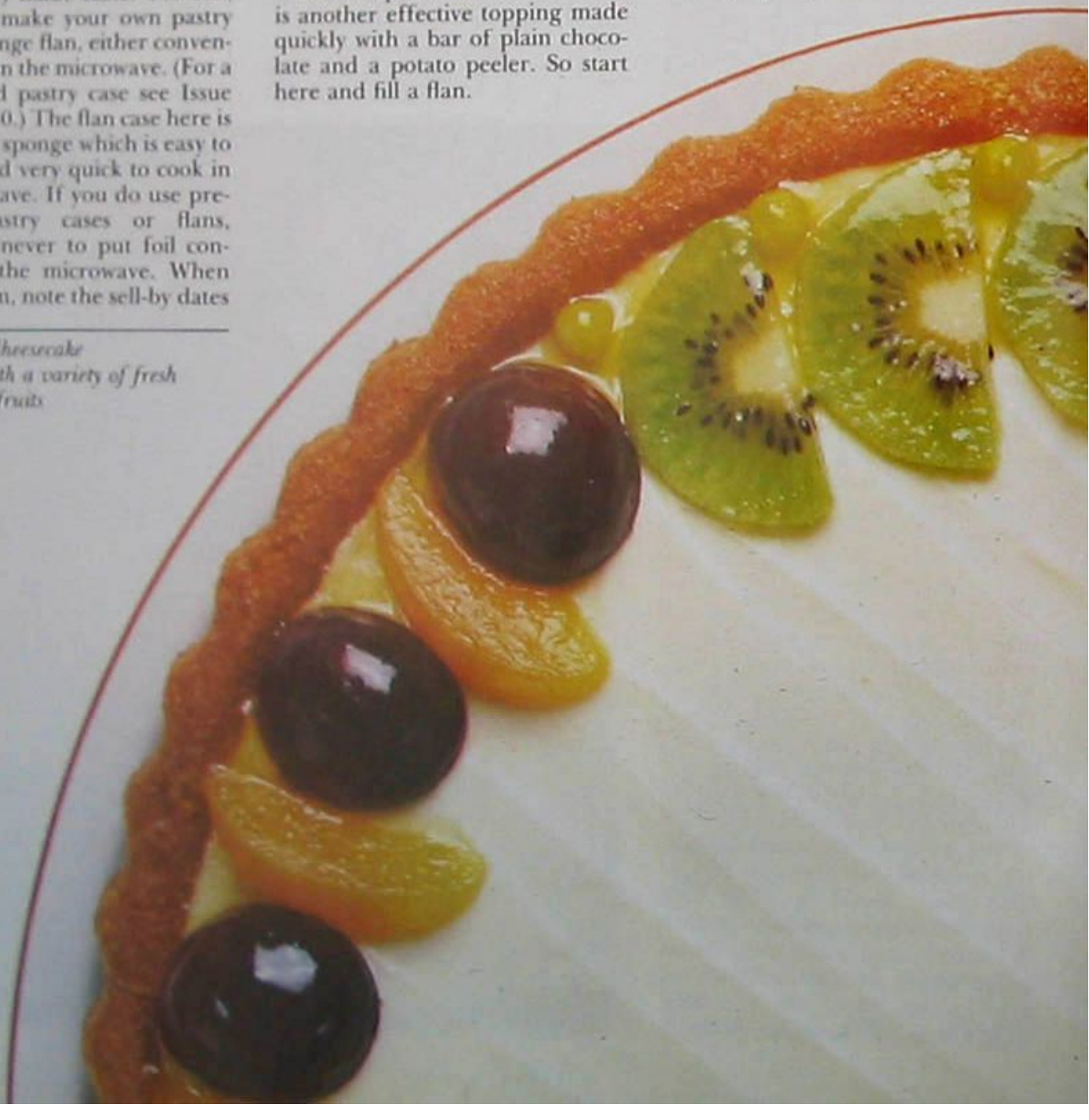
The speed of microwave leaves you with time for decorating to make really smashing looking flans. A meringue topping is a very attractive one that can be done with ease in the microwave. A neat remedy if any yolk gets into the whites as you are separating the eggs is to use a piece of the shell to scoop it out — much more efficient than a teaspoon. Shaved chocolate is another effective topping made quickly with a bar of plain chocolate and a potato peeler. So start here and fill a flan.

Easy fruit cheesecake

1 min

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz curd or cottage cheese
100g / 4oz cream cheese
75g / 3oz caster sugar
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
1 egg
30ml / 2tbls double cream
1 large sponge flan case



Easy Fruit Cheesecake garnished with a variety of fresh and canned fruits

TO DECORATE

411g / 14oz can apricot halves, drained
small bunch of black grapes, halved and pips removed
angelica

GLAZE

60ml / 4tbls apricot jam
15ml / 1tbls water

SERVES 8-10

1 Place the curd and cream cheeses in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds until softened.
2 Whisk the cheeses until smooth, then add sugar, lemon juice, egg and cream, whisking until light and creamy.
3 Spread in the flan case and chill in refrigerator for 10 minutes until just set.
4 Arrange the fruit on the top of the flan.
5 Make the glaze: place the jam and water in a small bowl; stir to mix, then microwave at 100% (High) for 40-60 seconds, or until hot and bubbly, stirring once. Press the mixture through a nylon sieve to make a smooth glaze and brush over fruit.
6 Chill the cheesecake for 10 minutes before serving.

VARIATIONS

Instead of the apricots and grapes, use orange segments, kiwi fruit, strawberries, cherries or pineapple.

Microtips

Always remember to remove a flan case from its foil container before placing the case in the microwave.

Chocolate flan case

3½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

You can use this flan case with any of the fillings given here.

2 eggs
50g / 2oz caster sugar
37.5ml / 2½tbls self-raising flour
30ml / 2tbls cocoa powder

MAKES 22cm / 8½in flan case

1 Grease a 22cm / 8½in flan dish and line the raised base with greaseproof paper. Lightly grease the paper.
2 Using an electric beater, whisk together the eggs and sugar until thick enough to hold the trail of the whisk for 3 seconds when the beaters are lifed. Sift together the flour and cocoa powder and fold into the mixture.
3 Pour the mixture in the flan dish. Tilt and tip the dish to spread the mixture evenly. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3½-4 minutes, or until the sponge is firm to the touch all over.
4 Loosen the case around the edges with a round-bladed knife and turn out on to a wire rack. Stand for 2 minutes, then remove the lining paper. Leave to cool for 10-15 minutes before filling.

DAVE KING

DAVE KING

Blackcurrant Meringue Flan

French lemon flan

6 mins

Standing time: none

1 large sweet pastry flan case
2 eggs, separated
40g / 1½oz caster sugar
juice and grated zest of 1 lemon
45ml / 3tbls self-raising flour

TOPPING
75g / 3oz plain chocolate
25g / 1oz butter
15ml / 1tbls icing sugar, sifted
lemon slices, to decorate

SERVES 4-6

1 Remove the flan case from the foil container and place it on a large plate.
2 Whisk the egg yolks with the caster sugar until well blended. Add the lemon juice and zest then whisk in the flour until mixture is smooth and creamy.
3 Using clean beaters, whisk the egg whites until stiff, then fold into the egg and lemon mixture using a large metal spoon. Turn into the flan case and smooth the top. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, or until the filling is set and firm to the touch, giving the plate a half-turn midway through the cooking time.
4 Allow to cool slightly while making topping. Break the chocolate into a small bowl, add the butter and cover with vented stretch wrap. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3 minutes, or until chocolate has melted, stirring mixture once or twice during cooking. Whisk in the icing sugar.
5 Spread chocolate mixture over filling. Decorate with lemon slices, then chill for 5-10 minutes or until set before serving.

Microtips

To get the most juice from a lemon, when making French Lemon Flan, microwave it at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds before cutting it in half and squeezing it. If the lemon is very hard and leathery, microwave it for an extra 10 seconds — but take care that the fruit does not get over-heated.

Blackcurrant meringue flan

4 mins

Standing time: none

1 large sweet pastry flan case
300g / 11oz blackcurrant pie filling*

TOPPING
2 egg whites
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
1.5ml / ¼tsp cream of tartar
100g / 4oz caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls toasted flaked almonds

SERVES 4-6

1 Remove the pastry flan from the foil dish and place it on a large plate. Pour in blackcurrant pie filling and spread evenly.
2 Place egg whites, cornflour and cream of tartar in a large bowl and whisk until egg whites are stiff. Gradually add the sugar, whisking all the time, until the mixture is thick and glossy.
3 Spread the meringue over flan taking it right to the edges. Sprinkle with the toasted almonds.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes, or until meringue is set. Serve hot or cold.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use apple or apple and loganberry pie filling.

Ice cream Flan

2½ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz chocolate chip ice cream
100g / 4oz coffee ice cream
1 small wholemeal sponge flan case or Chocolate Flan Case (see recipe page 1787)
plain chocolate, shaved

BUTTERSCOTCH TOPPING
25g / 1oz butter
25g / 1oz soft brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls maple or golden syrup
15ml / 1tbls double cream

SERVES 4

1 Place each ice cream in a separate bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-2 minutes.
2 Spread the chocolate chip ice cream over the bottom of the flan case, then spread coffee ice cream on top. Chill in freezer.
3 Place the butter, sugar, and syrup in a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds. Stir well and microwave for a further 1-1½ minutes, or until sugar is dissolved, stirring briskly every 30 seconds. Add cream and stir well. Serve at once with the flan.

Cook's notes

Ice cream flans can be made in many varieties. Try a banana split pie with sliced banana topped with vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce. For a more grown up version sprinkle 30ml / 2tbls coffee liqueur or medium dry sherry over the flan case before adding the ice cream.

Hazelnut and choc flans

20 secs

Standing time: none

These individual flans are made in a flash for an instant dessert, but look impressive enough for a formal buffet table.

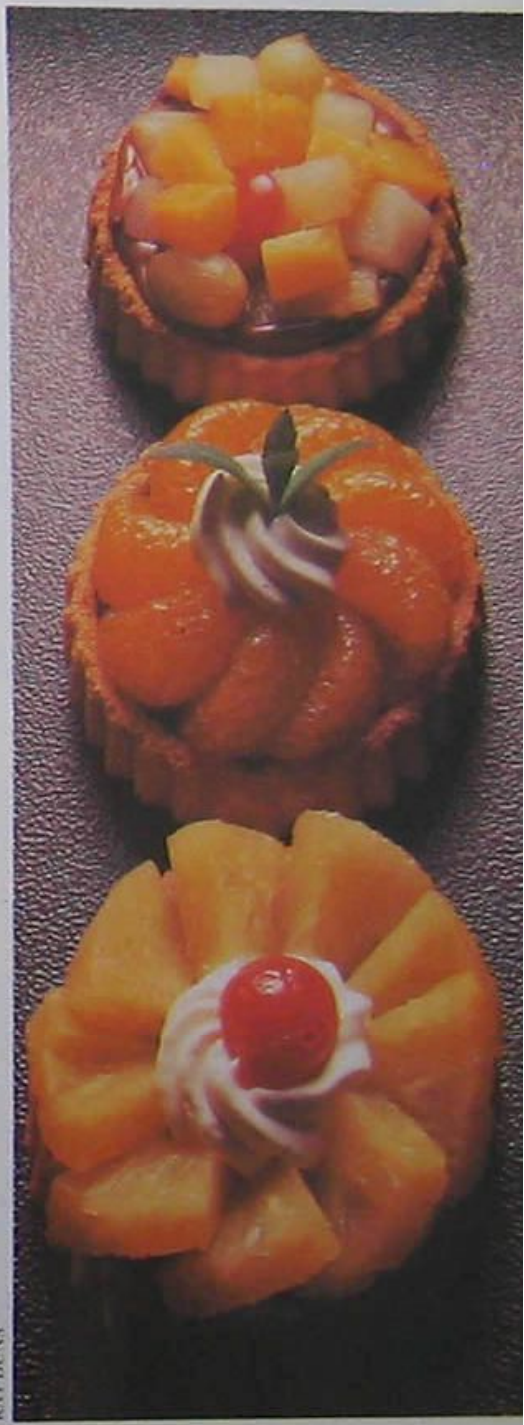
200g / 7oz hazelnut and chocolate spread
6 individual sponge flan cases

TO DECORATE
227g / 5oz can pineapple rings, drained and cubed
whipped cream

SERVES 6

1 Turn the hazelnut and chocolate spread into a small dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 20 seconds until slightly softened.
2 Spoon the spread into each of the flan cases and leave for 5-10 minutes to set slightly.
3 Just before serving, decorate flans with pineapple cubes and a swirl of whipped cream.

VARIATIONS
For the pineapple cubes use mandarin oranges or mixed fruit salad, drained. Pipe the whipped cream into rosettes and top with glacé cherries or mint leaves.



Below left: *Ice Cream Flan*
Right: *Hazelnut and Choc Flans with Fruit Salad, Mandarin and Pineapple Toppings.*

RAY DUNS

CLASSIC DISH

Sole Véronique

This elegant fish dish is not only a classic — it's a very special and subtle blend of flavours and textures, which has been the inspiration for a host of other dishes 'à la Véronique'.

If you are treating yourself (and your very best friends) to delicious, delicate sole, there's no more luxurious way to savour it than in a cream sauce, its richness cut by the freshness of sharp green grapes.

The flavour and texture of sole are superb, so don't be tempted to cut corners and use either water or a cube for the fish stock — it's worth the extra few minutes of microwaving to have the flavour of the fish in the sauce. Remember too, that fish takes very little cooking. So, if the fillets are thin, check them at the earliest recommended time. Sole should be enjoyed at its best — moist, opaque and just flaky.

For even cooking, choose a round dish for the fish. Test for doneness by flaking gently with a fork — the fish is ready when it is just possible to lift a flake of flesh.

The richness of the sauce demands a simple, beautifully cooked vegetable accompaniment. Try broccoli spears, piped duchess potatoes, petits pois, glazed carrots or baked tomatoes to complement the delicate flavours of wine, cream, and grapes.

Choosing sole

Whether you choose Dover or lemon sole* for this dish, always select fish with bright eyes, moist, shiny scales and no strong smell.

Dover sole is generally thought of as the aristocrat of the sole family — the flesh, when cooked, is particularly firm and has an especially good flavour. Lemon sole is, appropriately, lemon shaped, and plumper than the Dover sole. Its texture is not as firm, but it has a good flavour.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use frozen sole or fresh flounder

Sole Véronique

9 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb Dover or lemon sole fillets
salt and pepper
a knob of butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls dry white wine
45ml / 3tbls fish stock
60ml / 4tbls double cream
7.5ml / 1½tsp cornflour
½ small bunch seedless grapes, peeled (optional)

SERVES 4

Microtips

To make the fish stock, ask the fish monger for a small amount of fish trimmings. Put these into a bowl with 150ml / ¼pt water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes. Strain the stock before using.

Cook's notes

This classic dish was named after the first born child of the chef, who was born the same day the dish was created. Since then, the name Véronique has been applied to any dish served in a cream sauce with grapes. Sometimes, a dash of curaçao is added to the stock.

How to microwave Sole Véronique

Place *the fillets, skinned-side up, on a board and season with salt and pepper. Roll each fillet up, starting from the tail end. Grease a 1.4L / 2½pt gratin dish with the butter.*

Sprinkle *the onion over the dish and place the fillets on top. Pour over the wine and stock, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until just flaky, turning once.*

Transfer *fish to heated serving dish. Microwave liquid, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes to reduce. Blend a little cream with the cornflour in a bowl until smooth*

Pour *the reduced stock into the cornflour and cream mixture, stirring well until smooth. Mix in the remaining cream. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.*

Stir *the sauce twice during cooking, until hot and thick. Season to taste, then stir in the grapes and microwave at 100% (High) for about 30 seconds to heat the grapes.*

Pour *the sauce over the fillets on the serving dish, making sure that the fish is completely covered. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes to heat. Serve immediately.*

Adapting a recipe: sautés

Succulent sautés match tender pieces of meat or poultry with full-of-flavour sauces. A browning dish and half an hour are all that are needed to make these delicious recipes.

Browning dish sautés are truly versatile — simple, yet impressive. So easy to make, they are perfect for a family supper, yet their presentation and flavour warrant a dinner party.

Sautéing simply means frying food quickly in a hot pan with little fat. Coventional sautés are cooked over direct heat. The meat or poultry is fried until tender, then removed, and a sauce is made with the juices. With the help of a browning dish, the same effect can be achieved in the microwave, in a few minutes, and without standing over a hot cooker.

Microwaving sautés

Beef, lamb, pork, veal, offal and poultry are all suitable for sautéing but use only tender, lean cuts of meat. Try to make sure that all the pieces of meat are the same thickness and weight; this will ensure even microwaving.

Searing the meat or poultry in a browning dish adds colour and eye appeal to microwaved food and also seals in the juices, keeping the meat moist and tender. For best results, add meat or poultry quickly to the hot dish and press down well, one side after the other, with a wooden spatula. Use tongs or a fish slice to turn the meat, rather than a fork, which would pierce the meat and allow precious juices to run out.

Any juices that are left in the dish make a delicious base for a complementary sauce. Combine with wine, stock, fruit juice or cream depending on the meat or poultry (and the richness of the meal). A marinade adds extra flavour to the meat or poultry, and can then be used to make a flavoursome sauce using the pan juices and other ingredients.

Hungarian Beef Sauté

Hungarian beef sauté

CONVENTIONAL RECIPE

salt and pepper
30ml/2tbls plain flour
450g/1lb sirloin or fillet steak, cut into thin strips
15ml/1tbls oil
225g/8oz mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
225ml/8fl oz beef stock
150ml/¼pt soured cream
30ml/2tbls dry white wine

SERVES 4

Pre-heat a browning dish and add the oil.

Microwave at 100% (High)

Microwave at 100% (High)

Stir every minute

Microwave at 50% (Medium)

1 Season half the flour and toss the meat in it until thoroughly coated.
2 Heat the oil in a heavy-based frying pan, over a medium heat. Add the meat, and cook until it is no long pink. Add the mushrooms, onion and garlic and place over a medium heat until the meat is cooked and the vegetables are tender but still crisp. Shake the pan and stir frequently.
3 Transfer the meat and vegetables to a warmed plate. Whisk the remaining flour into the stock then stir into the juices in the pan. Place over a medium heat and stir constantly until smooth and thickened.
4 Return the meat and vegetables to the pan and stir in the soured cream. Over a low heat, cook the mixture until well heated through but not boiling, stirring constantly. Serve over wild rice or noodles.

Stir once

Microwave at 100% (High)

Stir once

Hungarian beef sauté

21 mins

Standing time: none

salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
450g / 1lb sirloin or fillet steak, cut into thin strips
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
225ml / 8fl oz beef stock
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
30ml / 2tbls dry white wine

SERVES 4

1 Season half the flour and toss the meat in it until coated.
2 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil and stir in the beef. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes or until the meat loses its pink colour, stirring once.
3 Stir in the mushrooms, onion and garlic. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-5½ minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring twice during cooking. Transfer the meat and vegetables to a warmed plate.
4 Whisk the stock into the remaining flour, then gradually stir into the meat juices in the browning dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, until thickened, whisking every minute.
5 Stir the meat and vegetables in to the sauce and add the soured cream and wine. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium), cover and microwave for 4-5 minutes, until heated through but not boiling. Stir once. Serve with noodles.

Microtips

Always check the cooker manufacturer's manual for their recommended times for pre-heating a browning dish.

Some manufacturers suggest placing the browning dish on an upturned heatproof plate or a purpose-built microwave trivet, to avoid damaging the floor of the cooker should the dish overheat.

How to microwave Hungarian beef sauté

Transfer *the microwaved beef and vegetables to a warmed plate. Combine the sauce ingredients in the browning dish and microwave until thickened.*

Return *the meat and vegetables to the sauce and stir in the soured cream and wine. Reduce to 50% (Medium) and microwave until hot but not boiling.*

Chicken chasseur

23½ mins

Standing time: none

This classic French sauce is equally delicious with steak or veal.

15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
4 chicken breast portions, skinned
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SAUCE
1 onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
175g / 6oz mushrooms, sliced
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
3 tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Pre-heat a browning dish for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Swirl in the oil, add the chicken portions, meaty side down, and press down until the sizzling stops.

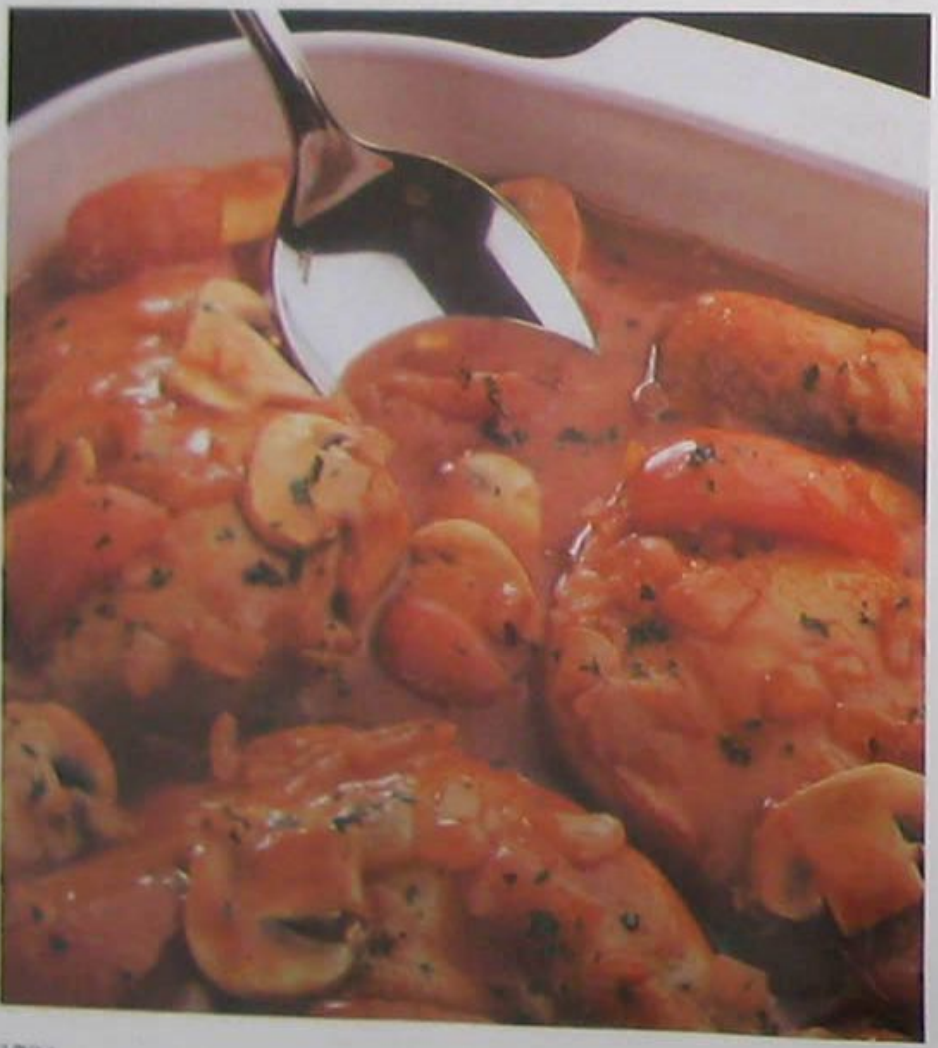
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until the chicken is no longer pink near the bones. Turn the chicken over halfway through cooking. Transfer to a warmed plate.

3 Place the onion, garlic and mushrooms in the browning dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes or until the onion is softened.

4 Sprinkle with flour, then gradually stir in the stock, wine, tomatoes and tomato purée. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, stirring every minute. Season to taste.

5 Return the chicken pieces to the dish and spoon over the sauce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes or until the chicken is really hot. Sprinkle with parsley, to garnish.

Chicken Chasseur



RAY DUNS

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Chinese-style pork

19 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb pork tenderloin or fillet, cut into thin strips
15ml / 1tbls soft dark brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls red wine vinegar
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp finely grated fresh root ginger
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
1 large red pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
1 large green pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
1 onion, cut into wedges
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste

SERVES 4

1 Place the pork in a shallow dish.

Steak Sauté with Red Wine

Mix together the sugar, soy sauce, vinegar, garlic and ginger. Pour over the meat and stir to coat. Cover and leave to marinate in a cool place for 3 hours.

2 Remove the pork from the marinade with a slotted spoon. Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Swirl in the oil and stir in the pork strips. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring twice.

3 Stir in the pepper strips and onion wedges and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring twice.

4 Blend the cornflour and tomato purée into the marinade. Stir into the pork and vegetables. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until meat is cooked stirring three times.

Steak sauté with red wine

17 mins

Standing time: 7 mins

4 sirloin steaks, about 175g / 6oz each
pepper
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil

WINE SAUCE
1 onion, finely chopped
30ml / 6tsp arrowroot
150ml / ¼pt red wine
150ml / ¼pt beef stock
5ml / 1tsp chopped thyme or 2.5ml / ½tsp dried

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

When making a sauce which contains quite a lot of wine, remember the quality of the wine will be reflected in the sauce — don't spoil it by using a vinegary wine.

Microtips

Remember that the base of a browning dish gets very hot. Use oven gloves to lift it, by the handles, when removing it from the microwave. For safety's sake, stand the dish on a heatproof surface.

How to microwave Steak sauté with red wine

Season *the steaks with pepper. Pre-heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to instructions. Swirl in the oil, add steaks and press down on both sides until sizzling stops.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Turn steaks over and microwave for 1½-2½ minutes, depending on preferred doneness. Transfer to a warmed serving plate, cover and stand for 7 minutes.*

Add *onion to juices in browning dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes or until tender. Blend the arrowroot with wine and stock. Add thyme and stir into the meat juices, blending thoroughly.*

Microwave at*100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until thick, stirring every minute. If necessary, reheat the steaks at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Pour sauce over and serve with French fried potatoes.*

Gingerbreads

Generous squares or slices of dark, sticky gingerbread have long been a tea-time favourite. Now you can cook this spicy, moist cake in a fraction of the time needed for conventional cooking.

Gingerbread is a 'natural' for the microwave because the ingredients — spices, dark sugar and black treacle — give a good, rich colour, so avoiding a pallid cake; a perennial problem when baking in the microwave. Gingerbread is also naturally moist and this, together with its high proportion of sugary ingredients, also makes it a good candidate for microwaving.

But these natural assets don't prevent you from varying the basic recipe — try adding a sweet topping or a cool, lemony icing.

Traditional Gingerbread

Lining the dish

Gingerbread is traditionally cooked in a rectangular, square or loaf shape. To prepare the dish, cut a strip of greaseproof paper the same width as the dish but long enough to stand above the rim at either side. Lightly oil the dish and line it with the paper, so that a 'handle' of paper is left at either end. This enables you to lift the cooked gingerbread cleanly and easily out of the dish.

Storing gingerbread

Most of the cakes here keep for a few days. Traditional Gingerbread and Iced Treacle Cake have excellent keeping qualities — they stay moist for three to four weeks if closely wrapped.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 2½tbls of syrup and treacle

Traditional gingerbread

15 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This gingerbread has a moist, spongy texture. Serve it plain or buttered or — as they do in the north of England — with a slice of Cheddar cheese.

225g / 8oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
7.5ml / 1½tsp ground ginger
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
75g / 3oz golden syrup*
75g / 3oz treacle*
75g / 3oz white cooking fat or cooking margarine
150ml / ¼pt milk
1 egg, lightly beaten

MAKES 12 PIECES

Microtips

Gingerbread has a high proportion of sugary ingredients, so watch the mixture closely during microwaving to make sure it does not overcook — if the top starts to look dry, remove immediately.

Freezer notes

Traditional Gingerbread and Banana Gingerbread can be frozen for up to three months.

To thaw, unwrap the cake, place on a plate and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4½ minutes, or until the top is soft and springy to the touch. Allow to stand for 10 minutes before cutting.

How to microwave Traditional gingerbread

Sift *the flour, salt and ginger into a medium-sized mixing bowl and make a shallow well in the centre of the dry ingredients.*

Put *the sugar, syrup, treacle and fat in a 575ml / 1pt bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes, or until melted.*

Allow *to cool until the bowl is no more than hot, then beat in the milk, then the beaten egg. Pour into the well in the flour mixture.*

Beat *together with a wooden spoon, to make a thick, smooth batter. Pour into an oiled and lined 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish, 6cm / 2½in deep.*

Place *on a trivet or upturned plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12 minutes, or until cooked, giving dish a quarter turn every 3 minutes.*

Test *for doneness by pressing with a fingertip — it should be springy. Allow to stand for 10 minutes and lift out on to a wire rack to cool.*

Hot-topped gingerbread

25 mins

Standing time: 20 mins

100g / 4oz sugar
150ml / ¼pt water
thinly pared zest of ½ lemon
3 whole cloves
2.5cm / 1in stick cinnamon
3 eating apples, peeled, cored and sliced
40g / 1½oz raisins
1 quantity Traditional Gingerbread mixture (see recipe page 1797)

SERVES 8

1 Put the sugar and water in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Stir until sugar has completely dissolved.
2 Add the lemon zest, cloves and cinnamon. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 4 minutes, to make a thick syrup. Remove zest, cloves and cinnamon.

Hot-topped Gingerbread

3 Add the sliced apples and raisins. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Remove and leave the apple mixture to stand for 10 minutes.
4 Meanwhile, prepare and microwave the Traditional Gingerbread following the steps on page 1797. Once cooked, allow to stand for 10 minutes.
5 Spoon the apple topping evenly over the top of the gingerbread. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until the apple is heated through. Serve hot, straight from the dish.

Cook's notes

Hot-topped Gingerbread does not keep well once assembled, but you can make the Traditional Gingerbread in advance and add the topping when you serve it.

Banana gingerbread

13 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Serve this cake hot as a pudding with pouring cream or Butterscotch Topping (Part 10, page 258); or leave to cool and serve sliced and buttered.

2 bananas
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
50g / 2oz white cooking fat or cooking margarine
175g / 6oz soft dark brown sugar
1 egg, lightly beaten
30ml / 2tbls milk
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
10ml / 1tsp ground ginger

MAKES 8 PIECES

1 Mash the bananas with the lemon juice.
2 Melt the fat in a small bowl at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes. Stir in the sugar, egg and milk.
3 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, salt, cinnamon and ginger into a mixing bowl. Make a well in the centre.
4 Add the banana to the well and pour in the liquid. Beat until smooth.
5 Spoon the mixture into an oiled and lined 900g / 2lb loaf dish. Shield the ends with small, smooth pieces of foil, well secured. Place on an upturned plate or a microwave trivet at 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes, or until the top is springy. Give the dish a quarter turn three times during cooking. Remove the foil after 5 minutes.
6 Allow to stand for 10 minutes. Serve at once for a hot pudding, or lift out on to a wire rack to cool. To store, keep well wrapped.

Microtips

Provided they are in glass or plastic jars, treacle and syrup can be warmed in the microwave. Remove the lid and microwave the jar at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.

Gingerbread house

8¾ mins

Standing time: none

150g / 5oz plain flour
150g / 5oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
65g / 2½oz soft tub margarine
50g / 2oz caster sugar
1 egg
100g / 4oz treacle
25g / 1oz plain chocolate

ICING
100g / 4oz icing sugar, sifted
about 15ml / 1tbls warm water
food colourings

MAKES 1 × 18cm / 7in HOUSE

How to microwave a Gingerbread house

Sift *the flours, ginger and cinnamon into a mixing bowl. In a 575ml /1pt bowl, beat the margarine and sugar until pale and fluffy. Add the egg and the treacle and stir with a wooden spoon, until smooth.*

Place *the chocolate on a saucer and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, then beat into the treacle mixture. Pour the mixture into the spiced flour and stir well until evenly combined.*

Knead *until soft, shape into a ball, wrap and chill for 4 hours. Unwrap and roll between sheets of greaseproof paper to 3mm / ⅛in thick. Trim edges to make a 20cm / 8in square. Reserve trimmings for biscuits.*

Score *shapes for a house, door, two windows, hedges and steps with a serrated knife. Microwave on cardboard at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes, or until firm, making a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes.*

Cool *the gingerbread on a wire rack. When cool, cut through the score marks to separate the house from the chimney, roof, hedges and steps. Discard trimmings unless wanted for extra windows or features.*

Mix *the icing sugar with the warm water to make a smooth paste. Divide between three small bowls; stir a different food colouring into each bowl. Use to assemble and decorate the completed house.*

Iced treacle cake

15 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

225g / 8oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
50g / 2oz drained stem ginger
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped
100g / 4oz caster sugar
175g / 6oz treacle
75g / 3oz white cooking fat or margarine
1 egg
150ml / ¼pt milk
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice

ICING
50g / 2oz cream cheese
25g / 1oz soft tub margarine
25g / 1oz icing sugar, sifted
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice

MAKES 8 PIECES

1 Sift the flour, salt, ginger and bicarbonate of soda into a mixing bowl. Rinse the stem ginger under cold water to remove the syrup and dry on absorbent paper. Chop finely and add to the flour, with the chopped walnuts. Make a well in the centre.

2 Place the sugar, treacle and fat in a 575ml / 1pt bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes. Leave to cool until the bottom of the bowl is hand-hot, then beat in the egg.

3 In a separate bowl or jug, mix the milk with the lemon juice. Pour the treacle mixture and milk into the well in the flour.

4 Beat the flour into the liquid ingredients with a wooden spoon until blended. Pour into an oiled and lined 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish, about 6cm / 2½in deep.

5 Place on an upturned plate or a trivet and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 12-14 minutes, or until the surface is dry and springy to the touch. Give the dish a quarter turn every 4 minutes.

6 Stand for 10 minutes, then lift out on to a wire rack to cool. When the cake is cool, remove the lining paper.

7 Mix all the icing ingredients together in a bowl and beat until smooth. Spread over the top of the cold cake.

Cook's notes

Measuring treacle or syrup can be a sticky business! A fuss-free method you can use for the Traditional Gingerbread and Iced treacle cake is to weigh the sugar first, spreading it out across the base of the weighing pan, and pour the treacle or syrup on to the sugar, until the combined weights are correct. If the treacle will not pour readily, you can melt it in the microwave provided it is in a plastic or glass container.